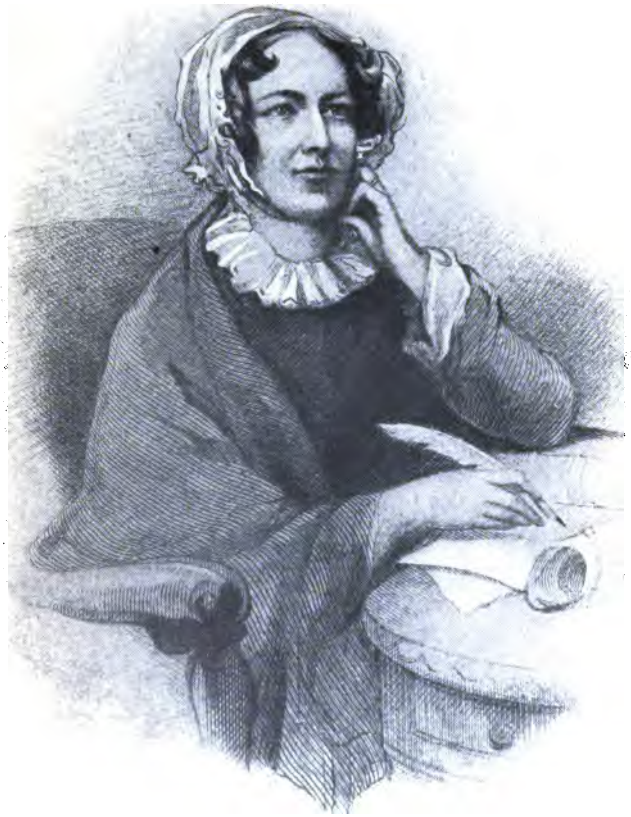
THE LIFE OF MRS. SHERWOOD



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EDITED AND [illegible] BY

ISABELLA GILCHRIST

LONDON
[illegible]TON, 43 THE EXCHANGE, SOUTHWARK, S.E.

1905

THE LIFE OF
MRS. SHERWOOD

THE AUTHOR OF 'THE FAIRCHILD FAMILY,' ETC.

EDITED AND ABRIDGED BY

ISABELLA GILCHRIST

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ROBERT SUTTON, 43 THE EXCHANGE, SOUTHWARK, S.E.
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To Mr. and Mrs. T. A. Janvier
in Affectionate Greeting

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

Mrs. Sherwood's Autobiography is of great interest. It gives a record of one kind of English social life towards the end of the eighteenth century, and the beginning of the nineteenth. We meet here some of those luminaries of the second degree who brightened the literary fame of the cathedral city of Lichfield; of Dr. Johnson himself we are told one illustrative anecdote. The sufferings of the English residents in France at the time of the First French Revolution are well described in this book, and we learn too of the gaiety of heart which enabled some of the French *émigrés* who found refuge in our country to live through times of cruel privation and anxiety.

Mrs. Sherwood also gives her own personal experience of the condition of the English Army early in the eighteenth century. We hear of the method of recruiting for the ranks, and of the attempted press gang for the Navy. An officer's wife's voyage to India was not then the pleasant trip it is to-day.

Her friendship with Henry Martyn and his companions gives us touching side-lights on the picture of that missionary hero.

As a writer of literature for children Mrs. Sherwood is probably somewhat out of date. The twentieth century finds but little time for pious moralizing, but any student of the manners of a hundred years ago cannot

do better than read carefully some of the stories in *The Fairchild Family* and *The Lady of the Manor;* for our authoress was born with the gift of narration.

It has seemed to us advisable to bring into most prominence the part of her story relating to actual life, and to try to arrange its details more consecutively. For this we think we have Mrs. Sherwood's own authority in her expressed wish that in her Indian Journals she had devoted more attention to events and less to thoughts and feelings.

It is impossible for us to express our admiration for this large-hearted woman too warmly, and we hope that the noble simplicity of her character may be found of interest to others.

CHAPTER II

Childhood

If there were no other argument against the celibacy of the English clergy, the great debt literature owes to the sons and daughters of the parsonage might suffice.

Mary Martha Sherwood, born at Stanford on the 6th of May, 1775, was the first daughter, and second child of the Rev. George Butt by his marriage with Martha Sherwood. A tinge of painful romance attaches to the Christian name given to the child. Mr. Butt had been deeply and devotedly in love with a beautiful girl named Mary Woodhouse, whose early death left him apparently inconsolable. His father's circumstances were somewhat impoverished, and Martha Sherwood, the cousin and companion of Mary Woodhouse, being endowed with a considerable fortune, a marriage was arranged between her and the bereaved lover, somewhat to the mental humiliation of Miss Sherwood, who was commanded by her father to marry the young man who had been so deeply in love with her friend.

Mary Woodhouse had been noted for her loveliness. Martha Sherwood was small in stature, plain-looking, and much marked with the small-pox, having only the physical beauty of perfectly shaped hands.

The Butts had been settled in Lichfield for some time, and Miss Sherwood, whose mother had died at her birth, was placed at the age of fourteen in the

care of Mrs. Woodhouse, the widow of a Lichfield physician, and a family connection.

Lichfield at the time was in its highest glow of intellectual sunshine. Dr. Darwin, Miss Seward, Mr. Edgeworth, and his daughter Maria, then a mere child, Mr. Hayley, the poet Cowper's friend, and Mr. Day, the author of *Sandford and Merton*, were, for the time being, inhabitants of the cathedral city. David Garrick came to visit his brother there, and Dr. Johnson was a native of the place.

The names call up each one its interesting association. Miss Seward, by priority of courtesy to her sex, may have the first place given to her. Mrs. Sherwood writes :—

'Miss Seward was at that period, when my father was a very young man, between twenty and thirty, for I know not her precise age. She had that peculiar sort of beauty which consists in the most brilliant eyes, glowing complexion, and rich dark hair. She was tall and majestic, and was unrivalled in the power of expressing herself. She was, in a word, such a woman as we read of in romances; and, had she lived in some dark age of the past, might have been charged with sorcery, for, even in advanced age, she often bore away the palm of admiration from the young and beautiful, and many even were fascinated who wholly condemned her conduct.'

It may be supposed that the charms of the 'Swan of Lichfield's' beauty must have enhanced the merits of her power of expressing herself. Her published work strikes one as being rather stilted. Macaulay says somewhere that his copy of her letters had come home

from the binders, and is now ready for another re-perusal; but that may be partly from the company he meets in the pages, and a little from his enjoyment of the critical faculty. Poor Sir Walter Scott found his position as literary executor to her letters a tedious and painful bequest. Her filial duty to her father, whom she tenderly terms her 'aged nursling,' is to her credit. Her reprisal for Dr. Darwin's rejection of her love may be added to the score of her misfortunes.

After Dr. Erasmus Darwin's death she published his biography, her long acquaintance with him, and her professed admiration for his work seeming to fit her to give the world a valuable memoir of him. The book was most unsatisfactory to the Darwins; so much so, indeed, that they charged her with having taken a cruel posthumous revenge on their father. It appeared that Dr. Darwin had rejected an offer of her affections. In justice to the lady it must be said that she avers her error simply consisted in painting too accurate a likeness of the sitter.

Darwin, Edgeworth, and Day were all eccentric men, though Edgeworth's manners seem not to have shown the peculiarities which marked the behaviour of the other two. But Dr. Johnson must have the credit, or discredit, of following his own will in the matter of social amenities. Mrs. Boswell's sarcasm that, though she had often seen bears led by men, her husband was the first man she had seen led by a bear, has corroboration from many of Johnson's circle. Mrs. Butt, when Miss Sherwood, was walking with Mrs. Woodhouse one day under the trees in the Close at Lichfield, when they were met by him, and, seeing that the younger woman

was reading one of his books, *The Rambler*, or *Rasselas*, he snatched it from her, and threw it over the wall into the graveyard. One forgives something to genius, and fame, in a town where one has tasted obscurity, is too full a cup to be carried without a very steady hand.

Mrs. Sherwood suffered from the *brusquerie* of Mr. Lovel Edgeworth in her infancy. Her mother and father took their little son and daughter with them when on a visit to Miss Seward at the palace of Lichfield, and he and Dr. Darwin were present. The children were brought to the room to be admired, and Dr. Darwin took the little boy by the leg, and held him up, exclaiming 'What a fine animal! What a noble animal!' Edgeworth's eyes fell on the little girl, and having looked at her for some time, he patted his own forehead, and after complimenting his friend on the child's well-nurtured frame, he went on to say 'But you may depend upon it, Mr. Butt, she wants it here!' tapping his own forehead again to emphasize his words. Mrs. Sherwood tells that in consequence of his words her parents had a very low opinion of her intellectual capacity till she was at least six years old.

In 1771 Mr. Butt was presented to the living of Stanford, in Worcestershire. As a parsonage was needed, he chose a picturesque site on the glebe land, and built a house to gratify his own taste. Here, in 1773, he brought his wife, who had only just attained her majority, and with his stipend, and her fortune, they were able to start housekeeping in a very comfortable style.

Like most men of genius, Mr. Butt had small capacity for the right economy of money, and before

many years elapsed, retrenchment was necessary, with the effect that the arrangement of the family finances fell into the hands of his wife. This seems to have had the result of creating in her mind a painful dread of poverty.

The burden of straitness of means never fell on the shoulders of the children, and their early years were as happy as was possible. Mrs. Sherwood writes :—' Had I been born of the noblest or richest family in England, I could not have entered life under any circumstances in which more of what is elegant and beautiful could have been presented to my young apprehension, and more of what is coarse and inelegant withdrawn from it, for all my early impressions were most beautiful as regarded natural things, and classical as regards intellectual things.'

Edgeworth's judgment of the little girl's want of mental capacity had the excellent effect of causing her parents to leave her mind to develop itself without attempted forcing of study until she was six years old. Like most imaginative children she lived in a world peopled with creatures of her own fancy. Her mother often sat in her dressing-room, singing to her own accompaniment on the guitar, and as her voice sounded through the lofty hall of the house, Mary Martha loved to sit on the steps of the hanging stair-case listening to it. When she married, Mrs. Butt had a favourite canary, which was preserved after its death, and kept in a little coffin in an Indian cabinet in the dressing-room. Strange thoughts grew in the child's mind, respecting this canary, and she fancied that her mother had played and sung to it ages ago, when it was alive.

These waking dreams possessed the power of keeping her quiet many a half-hour pondering on their strange enchantment.

There was an echo in various parts of the grounds at Stanford, and she figured Echo to herself as a beautiful winged boy.

In many cases it is idle to speculate whence a child derives its idea of heaven, but a large cartoon of Raphael's representing the martyrdom of St. Stephen, and the heavens opening before his upward gaze, hung in the hall at Stanford. Mary Martha was not four years old when she and her brother discussed their own notions of religion. The boy had a dream which he told to his sister. He had seen heaven over the trees in Stanford Park, and he had seen hell as he fancied it.

The first great event of Mrs. Sherwood's life was being taken to her grandfather Butt's house. He was then living at Pipe Grange, near Lichfield. The place made so deep an impression on her memory that, years after, when she was lying ill after prolonged sea-sickness in the cabin of an East Indiaman, with no light, and little air, she thought herself there again, and distinctly saw the ivy-covered walls of an old farmhouse in the neighbourhood, and its quaint front garden, planted with yew-trees cut into grotesquely shaped figures.

It was her fourth birthday while she was there, and when she came down on the morning, her grandfather put up his hand to a high mantel-shelf, and brought down a doll with a paper hoop, and a flax coloured wig for her.

From Pipe Grange they went to Lichfield to visit Mr. Butt's sister. They were taken to see Miss Seward

at the Palace, and she repeated verses to the little boy about Cupid, because, some time before, the ladies at Stanford Court had dressed him in a fanciful costume to represent Cupid, with a pair of butterfly-like wings, a quiver, and a bow.

After their return the children dated events from before and after their visit to Lichfield.

When we recall the conditions of travelling in England in 1779, we do not wonder that the journey formed an epoch in the children's minds. The carriage, heavy to suit the roads, and large to give room enough for its occupants and their luggage; the change of horses at the posting houses, and the leisurely mode of transit would each add to the interest of the journey. To-day travel is so much extended that children in the Butt's circumstances would have at least a yearly sea-side holiday, with its consequent going to and fro.

In the winter of 1778—1779, an addition was made to the family circle at Stanford. Mrs. Butt's only brother, Henry Sherwood, left a widower with two children, had re-married within the year following his bereavement. His second wife disliking the trouble of caring for the children of her predecessor, the little Henry and Margaret were brought to stay with their aunt. It was a very pleasant time for the cousins while they stayed together. Henry had a red pencil with which he drew some hieroglyphics on the stone frame of the nursery mantel-piece, and his cousin Martin guarded these so carefully from the scrubbing brush that they were not effaced for years.

Henry Sherwood married his cousin, Mary Martha, in 1803.

At times the children had another delightful companion. Mr. Butt was a pluralist, and one of his livings, that of Clifton-on-Teme, was served by a curate named the Reverend Robert Nash, a relative of his, whom he had helped into the ministry. Mr. Nash had married a woman old enough to be his mother, of a most unfortunate temper, who caused his home life to be very unhappy. He used often to escape from her and stay for days at the Stanford parsonage. It was a joyful time for the children ' when they saw him crossing the park, in his great bushy wig, his shovel hat, his cravat tied like a King William's bib, his great drab coat, and his worsted spatter-dashes.'

The picture does not seem too inviting, but Mr. Nash had great accomplishments. As soon as it was dark in the winter evenings, he would consent to their entreaties for a story, and recite the old tales over and over again without fatiguing his hearers. In truth it was rather unsuitable hearing for young ears, for he ' told of dogs which were supposed to have been spirits, and which were always seen in certain rooms when any of the family were likely to die, and other marvels of the like description ; added to which he could bark like a dog, grunt like a pig, play tricks with cards like a conjuror, and was very successful in numerous performances of the same kind.'

Mrs. Sherwood naïvely adds—' but as to his knowledge of religion, I cannot suppose that it was of any depth.'

About this time Marten Butt fell from the top of a six-barred gate, and hurt his head so badly that a serious illness followed. In consequence of this accident

the boy was much indulged, and allowed to play rough games which would otherwise certainly have been forbidden by his mother. In her youth a fashionable entertainment for ladies staying in country houses had been to have a large, strong tablecloth spread on the upper stairs of the wide old-fashioned staircases, then they seated themselves on this row by row on the steps, the men of the party seized the cloth by the corners, and the fun consisted in dragging it and the ladies downstairs. Marten had no tablecloth at his disposal, so he used to put his sister in a drawer, and kick her down the nursery stairs. He used also to heap chairs and tables one on the top of the other, seat the little girl upon them, and then knock them over; or he would put a bridle round her neck, and drive her like a horse with a whip.

It seems rather hard to believe, as his sister assures us, that he had a very sweet temper, and was a most affectionate and beloved brother. In any case it was an example of the tyranny of the weak over the strong. Mary Martha being a very robust child.

Mr. Butt found it necessary to augment his means by taking pupils, and he fitted up a cottage in a dingle on the glebe land at a short distance from the parsonage. This building had once been used for a mill, and the mill stream still flowed beside it down the declivity of the hill on which it was built. Being in Coventry when the church of St. Michael's was despoiled of the old stained glass of its windows, he had been fortunate enough to procure some of it, which had been thrown away as rubbish, and this he had fitted in the cottage windows. The scenes which it represented made an

impression on the little girl's mind. Lady Godiva on horseback, and other mounted figures, interspersed with quaint devices in rich colouring told their own stories in the sunlight.

In 1782 Mrs. Butt took her children, now three in number, two girls and a boy, to see her father, who was living near Coventry. His house stood on the site of the old cathedral, and was called the Priory, and beneath it were vaults whose extent was scarcely known. From the front windows there were views of St. Michael's and Trinity Churches. 'When the Cathedral occupied the third side of the square, Rome itself would hardly have supplied a finer view of ecclesiastical architecture.'

The fine churches, some old houses then remaining in Coventry, and old images of a nun and a king in her grandfather's garden, served to open a new world to the child, and, helped by her father's description, she seemed to see the town as it had been in mediæval times. The character of the weather may have impressed the picture more deeply, for that summer was remarkable from the fact, that 'the sun never appeared except through a fog, rayless, and of a dark red.'

It was the Fair while they were there, but not the year of Lady Godiva's procession, that being only a triennial festival. Mary Martha had, however, what she thought the great privilege of drinking tea in the house from which Peeping Tom was caused to appear, and seeing the closet from which he was shown. By the favour of her nurse she had a swing on a whirligig, and her brother had a ride on a wooden horse, but their mother was much annoyed when this breach of decorum came to her knowledge.

Mrs. Butt was a strict disciplinarian. Her eldest girl was fed with the plainest food; dry bread and cold milk for example. She had to stand in the stocks for hours when she did her lessons, wearing an iron collar round her neck, and a backboard strapped on her shoulders. Her younger daughter, Lucy, came in for easier times, and the boy, who studied with his father, seems altogether to have escaped bodily exercises. When he was learning Latin, Mr. Butt's tuition was so desultory that his wife studied that language in order to know that her son's lessons were done; and for emulation's sake his eldest sister also studied it, and made much more rapid progress in classical knowledge than her brother in their earlier years.

She was six years old when she began making stories. She could not write at the time, but she used to follow her mother with a slate and pencil, and get her to write down her ideas. Mrs. Butt copied these in pen and ink, and kept them out of love for her child.

In 1784 Mr Butt was appointed one of the chaplains in ordinary to his Majesty George the Third. He was required to be in waiting every November at St. James's, where he had to attend the *levées*, and he was present at the christening of the Princess Amelia. He had consequently many anecdotes to tell of 'the royal and noble when he returned home, and he brought something of the polish he had acquired in the higher circles into his own family.'

An interesting figure now makes her appearance among their circle. When Mr. Butt was a young man, visiting his brother, then practising in Bath as a physician, he was introduced to the widow of Dr. Butts, the

Bishop of Ely. She acknowledged the relationship between the two families, and some degree of intimacy followed.

Her youngest daughter, Charlotte, had married a Monsieur de Pelevé, a gentleman who held a post in the household of the Duc d'Orléans, just at the time when the first French Revolution broke out. Madame de Pelevé was separated from her husband, and coming to England, wrote of her trials to Mr. Butt, and was invited to make her home at the parsonage at Stanford for the time being. Mary Martha was then eight years old.

'Never shall I forget the arrival of Madame de Pelevé at Stanford,' she writes. 'She then owned to be forty years of age, and as her father had been dead forty years, it was impossible for her to plead that she was younger. She arrived in a post-chaise with a maid, a lap dog, a canary bird, an organ, and boxes heaped upon boxes until it was impossible to see the persons within. I was, of course, at the door to watch her alight. She was a large woman, elaborately dressed, highly rouged, carrying an umbrella, the first I had seen. She was dark, I remember, and had most brilliant eyes. The style of dress at that period was perhaps more preposterous and troublesome than any which has prevailed within the memory of those now living. This style had been introduced by the unfortunate Marie Antoinette, and Madame de Pelevé had come straight from the very fountain-head of these absurdities. The hair was worn crisped or violently frizzed about the face in the shape of a horse-shoe, long stiff curls, fastened with pins, hung on the neck, and the whole

was well pomatumed, and powdered with different coloured powders. A high cushion was fastened at the top of the hair, and, over that, either a cap adorned with artificial flowers and feathers to such a height as sometimes rendered it somewhat difficult to preserve its equilibrium, or a balloon hat, a fabric of wire and tiffany, of immense circumference. The hat would require to be fixed on the head with long pins, and standing trencher-wise, quite flat and unbending in its full proportions. The crown was low, and, like the cap, richly set off with feathers and flowers. The lower part of the dress consisted of a full petticoat, generally flounced, short sleeves, and a very long train; but instead of a hoop there was a vast pad at the bottom of the waist behind, and a frame of wire in front to throw out the neckerchief, so as much as possible to resemble the craw of a pigeon.'

This 'pad at the bottom of the waist behind' lingered long in English costume. Within our own recollection the strange proportions of the figures of old country women suggested this monstrous addition to their toilette; we have even heard their whispers to the effect that without it they would be in serious danger of taking cold.

Mr. and Mrs. Butt received their visitor with unquestioning hospitality. They accounted to themselves for the peculiarities of her appearance by her residence at the French Court, where it was almost obligatory to wear rouge. The band boxes were placed in the best bedroom of the parsonage, and a place of state was found in the drawing-room for Madame de Pelevé, where she sat like a queen and made herself

very agreeable by the number of her anecdotes. She was rarely fully dressed until one or two o'clock in the afternoon, and she daily presented herself either in new gowns, or new adjustments of those she had worn before. Her host's eldest daughter may have shocked the modest stranger as much as her own frivolities startled the stern judgment of youth. Until she was twelve or thirteen years old, Mary Martha wore a long pinafore, under which she loved to carry her doll slung by a string round her waist. She was a placid child, with very long hair of a bright auburn, and in spite of—or, perhaps, because of—the backboard, she stooped very much.

When Madame de Pelevé left Stanford she took lodgings in the neighbouring town of Ludlow.

CHAPTER III

YOUTH

After Madame de Pelevé settled at Ludlow, Mary Martha accompanied her father and mother on a visit there. The place left so deep an impression on the child's mind that, twelve years afterwards, she was able to describe it so exactly in her story of *Susan Gray* that the inhabitants often showed the old house in which one of the characters in the book had lived.

The relations between Mary Martha and her brother Marten had always been closely endearing. They read together the few books they had: *Robinson Crusoe*, two sets of *Fairy Tales*, *The Little Female Academy*, and *Æsop's Fables*. *Robinson Crusoe* was always in the boy's hands when he was disposed to read, and his wont was to place himself with his sister at the foot of the stairs, and to ascend one step every time he turned a page. Of course she did as he did. Another custom they had was to take two notched sticks on the first day of every month, and hide them in the trunk of a hollow tree in the wood as far from the house as they were permitted to go.

After their return to Ludlow the first sadness of the girl's life came upon her in the removal of Marten to Dr. Valpy's school at Reading. 'It was early in the autumn that we went to Ludlow,' she writes, 'and it was at my return that I felt the sadness I speak of,

for, from the time that my brother went to school, he never could be to me what he was before. The hours of infancy were gone, and with them its thousand delights, known only when the mind is fresh and young.'

The two children had been most happy in themselves and their surroundings. The beautiful wooded country in which they lived, their comfortable refined home, and the society of loving parents, joined, in the girls' case, at least, to the gift of perfect health, and a vivid imagination, combined to form an ideal memory.

As her sister's nurse, to whom she was much attached, left just at the time Marten went to school, Mary Martha was seriously unhappy, and had a shadow of the feeling of bereavement for the first time.

She was not long alone; her grandfather and grandmother Sherwood came shortly, bringing with them her little cousin, Margaret Sherwood, who remained under Mrs. Butt's care for a year and a half. Margaret was then a beautiful child of seven. At this time Mary Martha did not attempt to write stories, but she repeated them with her sister Lucy and her cousin Margaret for auditors; one story going on at every possible interval for weeks together. In company she was very silent and at a loss for words, but she did not feel this want in talking to her young companions. Of life as it is she knew nothing, but her mind was familiar with fairies, enchanters, wizards, and all the imagery of heathen gods and goddesses which she could get out of any book in her father's library.

The time of Margaret Sherwood's stay seemed very long and very happy. At length her father and stepmother came and took her away, thereby grieving Mary

Martha greatly, so to console herself she began to write fairy tales and fables, without, she afterwards thought, making much of them.

The girl grew so quickly that at thirteen she had attained her full height, which was considered above the usual standard of women; and, as she was still always dressed in a long pinafore like a child, she was much annoyed by the family acquaintances crying out that she promised to be a giantess. As her only companion of her own age was small and delicate she was thoroughly abashed at her own appearance, and was therefore never so happy as when she was out of sight of visitors in her own beloved woods of Stanford.

She had many retreats there unknown to any save herself, and there she used to seclude herself with a book, where she could enjoy herself in places where she could hear the cooing of doves, the note of the blackbird, and the rush of two waterfalls coming from two sides of the valley and meeting within the range, where she might wander undisturbed by anyone. Her large doll usually kept her company, though she was thought by the neighbours, too big to play with it.

Mr. Butt had a large fine edition of *The Tatler*, which was his eldest daughter's delight from the time she was eight years old. The description of Mr. Bickerstaffe had a strong effect on her mind, and about this time, as she stood alone in the wood at Stanford, she asked herself 'whether it was necessary that geniuses should be slovenly and old?' Her father had always told her that she was to grow up a genius, and, of course, she believed him, but she felt that if it were

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removal appeared a means of extended usefulness, while the increased stipend would be of great use; and the girls were at an age when the possible liveliness of a town compensates for the loss of the charms of a country life. But the projected departure from the lovely scenery to live in a small manufacturing town, and the loss of the society of Stanford added to the prospect of being brought into frequent contact with people of meagre education and little refinement, told painfully on their mother. In the summer months before they left Stanford, she spent hours walking to and fro in the woods, weeping most bitterly, and she indulged her grief until her health gave way, and she grew nervously alive to the smallest change, or the least fatigue. She does not appear to have had much sympathy either from her husband or her daughters.

Indeed, though in some things Mr. and Mrs Butt were well suited to each other, in many ways they were very ill-assorted. He was open-handed, and probably improvident, and the straitened circumstances resulting from building the parsonage at Stanford had caused his wife to be painfully afraid of being unable to meet the necessary domestic expenses. The need for economy had placed the management of the family resources in her hands, while he reserved a small sum for charity and his own expenses. He enjoyed, and was formed to adorn society. He loved humanity, and had so much sense of humour that he found some interest in the company of all conditions of men. She neither could shine, nor did she care to shine in society; she was silent, reserved, and fastidious to the point of superciliousness.

When we recall the circumstances of their marriage, and remember that it was arranged by the fathers on both sides when the bridegroom was suffering deeply from the loss of a woman whom he had loved with the first devotion of his heart, and the bride felt most acutely her own personal disadvantages in comparison with the beauty of her dead rival, it speaks well for the self-control and kindliness of both that their united life was passed in apparent harmony.

During the last few months of their stay at Stanford, Madame de Pelevé paid them another visit. This time she seems to have refrained from any efforts towards what she must have considered the improvement of Mary Martha's appearance and deportment. She was accompanied by three of her friends from Ludlow: a Mr., Mrs., and Miss Tosa. Mrs. Tosa was the sister of Clara Reeve, the writer of *The Old English Baron;* and Miss Tosa, who was just Mary Martha's age, but 'by no means so tall and awkward,' had a marvellous memory. Mr. Butt tried her in his daughter's hearing, and she never failed to rise to the occasion. When he repeated one line of any verse in the Bible, she was able to finish it correctly. In spite of her talent she was 'a quiet, unpretending girl.'

However child-like the thoughts and actions of a girl of thirteen may be, one considers that childhood is over at that age. The troubles and grief of Mrs. Sherwood's after life—and she had serious griefs—could never efface the memory of those happy early days spent in the lovely surroundings of Stanford. The general custom of her time was to approach Nature with more artificial feelings than are now avowed. Wild

flowers 'variegate the mead,' and save for the cowslip, the primrose, and the anemone, they are mostly nameless in the authors of her day. In that respect the eighteenth century writers might have studied the Elizabethans to much advantage. But a feeling with Nature may exist side by side with carelessness as to her manner of working, and the names given to her treasures. That Mary Martha's happiness was increased by constant intercourse with out-of-door life her autobiography shows. It may be, also, that her ignorance is not so fatal to enjoyment as is the scientific accuracy of description we find in some of the fiction of this generation. However that may be, one thing is assured; a happy childhood is one of the greatest gifts given to humanity, and such largess Mary Martha Butt tasted to perfection.

CHAPTER IV

At Kidderminster

The Butts commenced the year 1788 in Kidderminster, Mary Martha being then in her thirteenth year.

Over a century ago, the conditions of manufacturing life in England were greatly different from those of to-day. The master was not ashamed to live at his place of business, and his wife wore a coloured apron, and sat in the kitchen on all days save Sundays and holidays. Probably in Kidderminster, as in other towns, three or four apprentices shared the domestic life, and boarded with the family; often suffering hardships because of the harshness of their master, and the meanness of their 'dame,' as the master's wife was termed. The disuse of this custom was said to be a sign of degeneracy in the wives, who were grown 'too fine ladies to allow of it.'

The gayest and most refined family in Kidderminster in 1788 was that of a linen draper in the Bull Ring, and he no sooner heard of Mr. Butt's appointment to the living, than he sent his son over to Stanford, to solicit the new vicar's patronage. This Mr. Richard, or Mr. Dicky, as he was generally named, was a man of a singular character. He was somewhat of a theoretical exquisite in matters of dress, for, until noon, he always appeared in a dressing-gown of flowered chintz, tied round the waist with a rose-coloured riband. He was

unmarried, 'fat, fair, and forty,' exceedingly plump and round, with small features, and a most minute mind, which could only comprehend trifles. He had three sisters older than himself, who always sat on as many chairs in the parlour, according to their seniority.

The youngest and prettiest of the three had a curious love experience. Many years before a surgeon living in the town had paid his addresses, and his suit was accepted by her, and approved by her parents. But to the surprise of the neighbouring townspeople, no marriage followed the betrothal, though the lover went regularly to spend his evenings with his sweetheart at her own home. Nearly forty years later, on Mrs. Sherwood re-visiting Kidderminster, she found the same arrangement still existing. The lady's sisters had married and died, and her brother also had died in the interim. She was lame, and for years had been unable to do more than go from one room to another. Her father and mother were dead, and their house had been sold, and bought and presented to her for her life-time by her dilatory wooer, who still paid his daily visit, and had paid it all the intervening years since the engagement had been entered upon.

The story reminds one of the French lover, who, being reproached for a similar delay, asked where he 'should spend his evenings if he were so unwise as to marry Mademoiselle ?'

Among the innumerable people who called upon the Butts on their first settlement in Kidderminster were many Dissenters, who, at that time, were the best educated class in the town. Mr. Butt had made it known that he purposed making no difference between those of his parishioners who were churchgoers, and

those who were Dissenters; and he never departed from this rule in the years he held the living, but lived on terms of unity with all.

Unfortunately his wife could not reconcile herself to the society of the place, and when she had returned her calls, she retired more and more into seclusion. She was horrified by a visitor telling her that he had left his house that morning because it was *execution day;* and on learning that he meant by that term the periodical family washing day, she dropped all intercourse with him as soon as possible.

During this autumn she walked out a good deal with her daughters. On their side of the town there was one very pleasant walk, through an avenue of trees to an old black and white mansion belonging to a family named Stuart, and there they often went. She was, however, so much depressed, that she let all her discipline of stocks, collars, and lessons, lapse, and left Lucy, her youngest girl, to 'the care or neglect of Mary Martha.'

The two girls slept in a room overlooking the street, and they spent every moment they could spare in looking through the windows. They had a closet in this room, where they kept their treasures; a doll's house they had brought from Stanford, and all their books. These, together with two white cats, also brought from their country home, afforded them much amusement, but their dolls were the greatest delight to Mary Martha.

Mrs. Sherwood had no great joy in the recollection of Kidderminster, she was not unhappy there, but she had no pleasing memories of the place itself, although she had many pleasant walks with her sister, and happy hours

with her mother when Mrs. Butt was not particularly wretched.

For some years the sisters had had the custom of talking together when they were out walking, in the imaginary characters of two queens with large families who lived near each other. Almost as soon as they had crossed the threshold of the door Lucy would begin–'Well, sister, how do you do to-day? How are the children? Where have you been?' Relating these stories from day to day, and drawing all sorts of beings into their adventures, it happened that they went through the busy, dirty streets unseeing anything that was unseemly in their surroundings; and so deep was the impression made on her mind by these imaginings, that Mrs. Sherwood believed that fifty years afterwards, if she had walked on the same roads with the same companion, she would have been able at once to take up the thread of the old discourses.

Mrs. Butt had made acquaintance with the family of a physician who had just settled in Kidderminster. His wife, whom he had married from Dronfield in Derbyshire, was well acquainted with Miss Seward, and had often visited her in Lichfield, and knew also all the notabilities of that city. She had written a novel, and could write sonnets. Though Mrs. Sherwood said she had not much feeling, after the death of her little daughter, the grief of her loss affected her mind so deeply that she persisted in washing and dressing the body daily; refusing to let it be buried, and keeping it with her day and night, until the scandal of this behaviour roused the mob to threaten to burn down the house where she resided.

Agreeable as these people were, Mrs. Sherwood thought that they had been dangerous companions. The doctor was an atheist, and he had imbibed the political theories of Edgeworth, Day, and their school, without having their sense of decorum to restrain him from uttering his views on unsuitable occasions. It does not seem, however, that the Butts were much harmed by the association, though, after a time, the doctor and Mrs. Butt never met without falling at once into discussion. On the part of the children, argument grew somewhat heated, for on one of the doctor's sons saying that he did not believe the founder of the Christian religion had ever lived, Lucy Butt struck him with all her might, rolled him on the carpet, and beat him with all her strength, while Mary Martha looked on without interfering.

This summer Madame de Pelevé came to Kidderminster, and took lodgings in the town after staying a few weeks at the vicarage. With kindly intention she made a shepherdess hat of pale blue silver tiffany for Mary Martha, much to the girl's discomfort, for the edifice had to be fastened on her head with large corking pins, and she felt it to be a 'terrible evil.' About this time her father took her to see a friend of his, a Mr. Hawkins Browne, who had lately married a daughter of Lord Kinnoul's, and as a large party was expected to dinner Mary Martha was told to put on her best dress, which was a pale blue silk slip with a muslin frock over it. Her silver tiffany hat had been sent with her, and she did not dare but wear it. Mrs. Browne had commissioned a maid to dress her, and great was the pains she took to arrange her long hair hanging in curls, and to fix the hat properly on one side as it ought to be worn.

There were a number of great people in the drawing room when she went down but no child was of the company. An 'Honourable Mr. Something Wennam,' a man of thirty-five, or forty, thought it would be amusing to be excessively polite to the young shepherdess. He handed her in to dinner with great ceremony, and when they were walking in the shrubberies in the evening he offered her his arm, but declining the offer unceremoniously, she darted up a bank and ran away. She was very tall, and he not understanding her wild ways, constantly attempted to catch her, and she as constantly escaped him; he never could come up with her, and always called her 'the mountain nymph, sweet liberty.'

On their return home they found that Mary Martha's grandfather and grandmother Sherwood had arrived from Coventry during their absence, bringing with them their little grandson, Henry Sherwood, whom they purposed placing at the Free School in the Churchyard at Kidderminster. His father, Mrs. Butt's brother, had by this time so much involved his affairs by neglect and extravagance that his children needed attention as much as if they had been orphans. Mrs. Butt would have acted the part of a mother to the little Margaret some time before, but the child's father took her away. Her grandfather had brought her again from him, and placed her at school in Coventry, and now he wished to settle Henry with his Aunt at Kidderminster. The old man was so much attached to these unfortunate children, that his anxiety about them shortened his life.

In 1787 Henry Sherwood's father had taken him to France, and in the boy's early memoranda, Mrs. Sherwood finds these passages:

'I, Henry Sherwood, being eleven years of age, was at Boulogne, where my father had taken lodgings opposite the market, where there is a church with a slated roof. I, Henry Sherwood, watched the soldiers forming the date 1787 on the building in different coloured slates.'

This year was so very near the commencement of the First French Revolution that, young as Henry Sherwood then was, he could not help remarking many things which portended the coming storm. Numberless exaggerated stories were told of the Bastille and its horrors. It was said 'that the French people, in consequence of it, could not speak their minds without danger. It was said, too, that noblemen sat to be shaved with drawn swords in their hands ready to kill the barber if he drew blood; that peasants were shot like pigeons, and that half of France was confined in this same Bastille.'

Mrs. Sherwood's sympathy for the French King, Queen, and Aristocracy probably leads her to forget the injustice under which the working classes in France had suffered for generations. In his memoir, M. de Saint Simon shows no consideration whatever for people of a lower rank than his own; the most important question with him is the order of precedence, and the injustice of allowing privileges to noblemen and ladies who have not the proper claim to them. Madame de Sevigné, a kindly hearted woman towards her own circle, has no condemnation for barbarities inflicted on peasants in revolt. These writers only expressed the general sentiment of their equals and their period. Mr. Buckle in his *History of Civilisation*, calls attention to the fact

that Voltaire is the first European historian who takes the people into the account of deeming their interests worthy of any notice.

Mary Martha's first meeting with this cousin, Henry Sherwood, who was afterwards to become her husband, had taken place at Stanford, when he was a very little boy, and she five years of age. She had two years advantage, or disadvantage, of seniority over him. She was delighted to see him again when they came in from their journey, and he smiled with apparent great delight when he saw his cousin. He was standing at the tea table when they entered; he was unusually small of his age, and had fair hair, and he was dressed in a suit of what was then known as 'pepper and salt' cloth.

He was soon settled in his place as a day scholar at school, making his home at the vicarage, and was a very quiet little personage, very good tempered, and very much in awe of his aunt. In the bedroom next to that allotted to him there was a shelf containing *Plutarch's Lives*, and he got these books into his own hands, and read them again and again.

Old Mr. Sherwood was fast breaking up at this time, but his second wife neither sympathized with his afflictions, nor felt the approach of her own age. One day while she was staying with them during this visit to Kidderminster, she took Mary Martha and Lucy with her to visit Mr. and Mrs. Hoskins, who were then living at the parsonage at Stanford. When the girls arrived there they ran off at once to see their friends, the Winnington's, at Stanford Court, and as they were hurrying along the road, the wind caught Mary Martha's

hat, and blew it into the middle of a sheet of water known as the North Pool. It was impossible to reach it, and the girl presented herself at her friend's house, hatless, and with her long hair blown into confusion by the wind. She does not tell us whether or not it was the shepherdess headgear of silvery tiffany, but she does say that the greatest trouble of the accident to her was the fear of her grandmother's displeasure at the loss of the hat. Lady Winnington, pleased to see the girls, only laughed at the accident, and found one of her daughter's hats for Mary Martha, sending a manservant to fish out the missing headgear.

A little later in the day Lucy fell out of the swing and received a severe blow, which resulted in a black eye. But the day's misfortunes were not yet over, for the driver of their carriage was a stranger to the neighbourhood, and as it was nearly dark when their grandmother called for them he took a wrong turn, and led them many miles out of their way over a very rough road. Though Mary Martha knew he was going wrong she said nothing, for she had long wished to know whither this way led, and she may also have judged that the misadventure of being lost would divert attention from the subject of her ruined hat. The carriage, however, was not overturned, and an enforced walk was the principal inconvenience they endured.

George the Third, Queen Charlotte, the elder Princesses and their brother, the Duke of York, were visiting Bishop Hurd at Worcester, and attended the Musical Festival about this time. One day they came to Hartlebury, and breakfasted there, and all the population of Kidderminster turned out in order to see

the Royal Party. Mr. Butt took his children in his gig to visit his friend Dr. Carver, the then Rector of Hartlebury, in order that they might have the pleasure of the occasion, and Madame de Pelevé took the trouble to dress Mary Martha before they set out. She came to the vicarage and 'began her operations by fastening a horse-hair cushion on the top of the girl's head with double black pins. She then rolled her hair in curls, and pinned them in order. Above these she placed a black beaver hat with feathers, attaching this, so that it should stand hollow from her head, by steel pins nearly half-a-yard in length.' Madame having withdrawn, Mary Martha 'took out every pin, shook down her hair, and tied her hat in her own style, which was that of a very untidy awkward girl, fitter to play in a wood than to appear before the great and royal party,' but Mrs. Butt, being short-sighted, did not observe the change in her daughter's appearance.

The girls were taken 'with the respectable part of the company' into the hall of the castle, where they waited for the royal party coming out of the breakfast room. They saw them all—'the good old King, his Queen, the three fine elder Princesses, and their very handsome brother, who entered the hall and walked slowly through it, quietly returning the courtesies of the company. But when they came to where the girls and their father were they made a full stop, and spoke to them—or rather of them—the Queen using a courtly phrase touching their appearance, and smiling whilst the King and the Princesses looked at them with encouraging looks. They, of course, blushed and bridled, and could not imagine how this could be. The

royal party knew Mr. Butt, and yet were not to know him, according to Court etiquette, because he was not wearing his gown and cassock. The compliment to the girls' *beaux yeux* was simply to express that they knew their chaplain, though restrained by form from addressing him.'

CHAPTER V

Home Education

The year 1788 was the centenary of the landing of William of Orange in England, and the anniversary was kept with great rejoicings all over the Realm. The people held feasts, the bells were rung, and orange favours were worn. Mrs. Butt, with the girls, had gone to Coventry to see her father, and the festivities in that town made a deep impression on the young people's minds.

This visit was the last that Mrs. Butt ever paid to her father, who still resided in the house where she was born, and where her mother had died. Old Mr. Sherwood was then bowed to the earth with grief. His second marriage does not appear to have been very congenial, and his son's conduct was a source of constant grief to him.

Mr. Butt, meanwhile, was in waiting at St. James's; the King's life was despaired of at the time, and a sermon preached by the Chaplain created much attention. 'The eyes of his audience were suffused with tears, and after the sermon he received the general expression of the warmest gratitude. The newspapers spoke much of this discourse, and a desire was expressed for its publication. As he was still in straitened circumstances through building the parsonage at Stanford, his friends advised that a subscription should be raised for the publication of his Court sermons. This was done, and the sermons were printed in 1791 in two octavo volumes.

The question of publication by subscription allowed a means of making money for authors now outworn. How very few modern preachers receive what they feel to be adequate remuneration for the labour they have taken in preparing spoken discourses for the Press!

In the early spring of 1789 Henry Sherwood was taken back to Coventry, much to the grief of his cousin, for she had begun to feel a deep friendship for him.

This year she was sent with her sister to an Assembly Room every fortnight to learn dancing. Here she made acquaintance with a girl a year older than herself who had learned Miss Burney's novel of *Cecilia* off by heart. While the other children were practising their steps, she repeated it to Mary Martha, and so inspired her with the wish to write a novel that she wrote a dedication and a title page for the book, and then wrote no more of it. Next she attempted writing plays, and went on writing them for two or three years, although these fine efforts never went beyond the vicarage parlour. One of these works had the singular name of *The Widow's Prayer Book*, but Mrs. Sherwood is careful to explain that she is happy to say it was not a jest upon religion, though the title might lead a person to suppose so; she does not, however, tell what was the plot. Lucy Butt also began to write plays, and Mary Martha attempted to write verses in addition, but she found that she had not the gift of language sufficiently to make a success as a poetess, and never attempted that style of composition again.

Though she could tell long stories for her sister's amusement when they were alone together, she was painfully silent in company, being unable to think of

anything to say, nor would she have been able to express her thoughts in words. This want of address was at its worst with her from the age of thirteen to that of seventeen, and she believed it to have been a natural defect, only overcome by much mixing with the world, and repeated efforts in composition.

Her father required her to write a 'Thema' for him every Saturday on a given subject, and one morning when she went to him to ask on what her essay should be written, he was busy, and all the reply he made was in the words 'Hoc age.' She vainly asked him to explain what he meant, but he only answered 'go and make it out,' so she went to her own table, took her pen and a sheet of paper, and wrote 'hoc age' at the top in a fair round hand. Then she put the translation of the words—'do this'—in another line, and there she stayed, unable to find another word. When it was time to show her exercise she had only written four words at the top of the paper. 'Very well,' said her father, smiling, 'you will not forget "Hoc Age" again,' and he urged her always to find out the nearest duty and do it at once. She says 'my father was the more anxious to give me this lesson as he himself had often suffered from want of attention to what the present moment immediately required of him.'

About this time Mr. Butt had an amusing misadventure through this abstractedness. He was invited to dine with Lord Stanford, at Enville, near Kidderminster; and, as was usual, his dress suit was laid ready for him in his study, his linen and stockings being in a wardrobe in the same room. He was very busy writing at the time, but, thinking to be ready when the

man came round with the carriage, he changed his clothes early in the afternoon. Later, forgetting that he had already performed his toilette, he again changed his clothes, and put on fresh linen, and another pair of silk stockings. When the carriage was announced, he slipped on his overcoat, and in this garment passed the critical eyes of his wife who stood in the hall to see him off. Lord Stanford's butler, Johnson was well known to him, and when he was helping him off with his coat he looked hard at his attire, and then said, 'My dear sir, you have a large hole in your elbow, and the linen is visible.' After some reflection he remembered that he had changed his clothes twice, and Johnson took him into his pantry, brushed his coat well, inked his elbow, and looking at him in approval of his pains, said 'Now, sir, go into the drawing room, say not a word about it, and, my life for it, not a lady or gentleman will find you out.' The dinner was a merry one, and Mr. Butt was the life of the party; growing much elated before the meal was over he turned to Johnson and said 'I must tell them; it is too good to be lost,' and he did tell of his absence of mind to the great glee of the whole party, but much to the annoyance of poor Johnson, who scolded him for the breach of punctilio when he helped him into his coat before he went home.

Having much more confidence in his wife's management of the family exchequer than his own, Mr. Butt used to bring every guinea he received, and throw it in her lap, receiving a few shillings back for charity. He was rather afraid to ask for more than a few shillings at a time, and this habit of his was not

without inconvenience occasionally. Once a poor blind musician was knocked down in passing through the streets of Kidderminster, and though he fortunately escaped without injury, his violin was smashed beyond repair. The vicar was in a dilemma, for the new fiddle would cost more money than he had, or liked to ask for; however, he had a tree cut down on the glebe land, and bought the man a new instrument with the price of the timber.

One of their friends was Mr. Plumptree, then Rector of Stone, afterwards Dean of Gloucester. He was a kindly, pleasant man, but Mary Martha dreaded his coming to visit her parents. She was never able to keep her shoes up at the heel unless they were supported by ankle-bands, and ankle-bands seem not to have been then worn. Thus she often walked slipshod; her mother being short-sighted, did not notice this untidiness, but when Mr. Plumptree—who seems to have been of a precise nature—came to the vicarage, he drew the attention of the family to the girl's neglect by constantly begging, 'Do, Miss Butt. pull up your shoes.'

To avoid his scrutiny she would let her frock down over her feet, but unavailingly, for he was in the habit of following her to look if her shoes were down at heel, or not. The very last chastisement she ever received was for this fault, for she was shut up all one day in an attic, and only allowed bread and water to eat on account of her shoes. It speaks well for her amiability, when she says that, in spite of this persecution, she liked Mr. Plumptree very much.

The Plumptrees were a literary family, and the eldest boy had written a play in 'a large straggling

hand on foolscap.' Lucy Butt was also engaged in dramatic work, and once, when the three children were walking together from Stone to Kidderminster, Lucy and he fell into a discussion about the several characters of their *dramatis personæ* which proved so engrossing, that, forgetting both time and place, they slipped backwards into a dry ditch whence Mary Martha had to help them.

A manufacturing town, such as Kidderminster was at that time, seems scarcely the home likely to have been chosen by the people of whom Mrs. Sherwood tells the following story. 'A family took one of the handsomest houses in the neighbourhood, and furnished it in a style not often seen in those days. Here they established themselves with a large staff of servants and a carriage. The family consisted of an elderly lady of pleasing appearance, and two girls; and they brought with them letters of introduction from a most respectable gentleman in Devonshire, and had what was then considered the privilege of the friendship of Mrs. Hannah More. The young ladies were named Philadelphia, and Dorothea Percy, and they were said to be the daughters of a Duke of Northumberland, whose miniature they wore set in brilliants.

'The elder of the two sisters, Philadelphia, was a tall, fair girl, grave and silent, but singularly elegant and modest. Dorothea had neither the beauty nor the dignity of her sister, to whom she was most devoted.' Mrs. Butt admired the younger ladies, though she did not like the elder so well. Still she did not discourage the acquaintance between the girls and her daughters, and they were often together, dining at each other's

houses. 'A very marked resemblance existed between the Misses Percy and their *gouvernante*, but no relationship was confessed, and when first the elder and then the younger girl died of consumption, their unfortunate mother, for such she was supposed to be, had not even the painful solace of avowing her rightful claim to weep for her daughters.'

On the 5th of June, 1790, Mrs. Butt's father died at the age of seventy-five, and the next week he was buried beside his first wife, Martha Ashcroft, in the north aisle of Trinity Church, Coventry. His mind had failed for months before his death, and he owed all the comfort of his last years to a faithful servant, who was more to him than his son had ever been. On the death of his father his son went to live in France; he was then looking for great social developments from the progress of the First French Revolution; and he took all his family with him, except Margaret, whom he left at school in Coventry.

In the Christmas holidays of 1789, a friend of Marten Butt's, a Master Kidd, came to spend some time with him. He was a merry boy, and disconcerted Mrs. Butt greatly by his restlessness. He had a habit of crying out 'Which way does the crow fly?' on almost every opportunity, which Mary Martha thought very amusing, but the most amusing thing of all to her, was his amazing appetite. 'He went into the kitchen before every meal, and stuffed huge pieces of bread, lest, as he said, he should terrify Mrs. Butt at table, and cause her to ask 'which way the crow flew?' To Mrs. Sherwood's astonishment he became in after years 'a grave and erudite physician,' and 'a man of learning and talent.'

On his return from his duties at St. James's, Mr. Butt had stayed some time with his friend, Dr. Valpy, at Reading, and had been taken by him to Mr. St. Quintin's school at the Abbey, in order to see an exhibition got up by the schoolgirls there; he was so much charmed by what he saw that he at once decided to send Mary Martha here to school.

CHAPTER VI

The Abbey at Reading

Impossible as it may be to convince the young people of the Twentieth Century to that effect, it is still true that, over a hundred years ago, when the nation was supposed to be in as benighted a condition with regard to education as it was respecting so many other objects, there were women of good mental training, and schools where needlework was not the only accomplishment; though, perhaps, some of the old-fashioned embroideries, with the delicate shading and enduring colouring of the silks with which they are worked, cannot have failed in affording discipline for the mind as well as artistic tuition. Even in those days teaching was not always confined to working samplers and chronicling the small beer of learning by rote for the purpose of encouraging a good memory. Poverty has its compensations, and the shortness of means befalling gentlewomen often showed one egress into a wider area reached by opening a school.

The Abbey School at Reading had the privilege of training distinguished women. Madame St. Quintin, one of the proprietresses at the time that Mary Martha became a pupil there, had been left an orphan at an early age, and adopted by a wealthy bachelor uncle. He accustomed her to a life of ease and gaiety, and it was understood that she was to inherit his considerable property on his death. Instead of leaving it to her, however, he bequeathed all his possessions to his

housekeeper, and his niece was left penniless. She was then of full age, and in this crisis she became a partner with her own old schoolmistress Mrs. Latournelle, of Reading, and the two together carried on the establishment with success.

Among the English immigrants from France was a Monsieur St. Quintin, who arrived at Reading under the patronage of Dr. Valpy. 'This gentleman was a man of a very superior intellect, the son of a nobleman in Alsace. He had been engaged in the diplomatic service, but from circumstances, his affairs had reduced him to so low a state that he was thankful to become a French teacher in Dr. Valpy's school. When established at Reading Monsieur St. Quintin was recommended to teach French at the Abbey; not long after this he married the younger partner of the school, and very soon so entirely raised the credit of the seminary that before long there were above sixty girls under her charge.'

The Abbey itself had been used for a girls' schoolhouse for a very long period. In Mrs. Sherwood's time 'there remained of the ancient building a gateway with rooms above, and on each side of it a vast staircase of which the balustrades had originally been gilt. Then, too, there were many little nooks and round closets, and many larger and smaller rooms and passages, which appeared to be rather more modern, whilst the gateway stood without the garden upon the Forbury, or open green, which belonged to the town. The best part of the house was encompassed by a beautiful old fashioned garden, where the young ladies were allowed to wander under tall trees, in hot summer evenings; whilst around

two parts of this garden was an artificial embankment from the top of which we looked down upon certain magnificent ruins, as I suppose, of the church begun by Henry the First, and consecrated by Beckett in 1125.'

It was on a Sunday evening when they reached Reading, and rather late when Mary Martha was taken from Dr. Valpy's house on the other side of the Forbury to the Abbey. Mrs. Latournelle received her, for the school was not yet met, and Monsieur and Madame St. Quintin were in London.

'Mrs. Latournelle was a woman of the old school, a stout woman, hardly under seventy, but very active, although she had a cork leg. She was only fit for giving out clothes for the wash and mending them, making tea, ordering dinner, and in fact, doing the work of a housekeeper. She never had been seen or known to have changed the fashion of her dress; her white muslin handkerchief was always pinned with the same number of pins, her muslin apron always hung in the same form; she always wore the same short sleeves, cuffs and ruffles, with a breast bow to answer the bow on her cap, both being flat with notched ends.' She received Mary Martha in a wainscotted parlour, 'the wainscot a little tarnished, while the room was hung round with chenille pieces representing tombs and weeping willows. A screen in cloth-work stood in a corner, and there were several miniatures over the lofty mantelpiece.'

The girl was cordially welcomed, and made to sit down before a good fire to warm herself before she went to bed, and while she was wondering at the new world

into which she was introduced, another pupil, a girl who had been spending the holidays near at hand, came in dressed in a blue satin cloak trimmed with fur. 'Oh, how fine I thought it!' says Mrs. Sherwood. She was a pretty girl, too, somewhat older than Mary Martha.

Mrs. Sherwood does not tell of having felt any of those painful regrets at leaving home which grieve many girls on their first night at school after the holidays. Her circumstances as a parlour boarder, and the daughter of a man whose character and position made his countenance of value to the Abbey School, caused the small world here to show its best side to her. Granted all these privileges, we might still have expected to hear some word of desolation from one who showed so much affection in after life; but whether from the philosophy of endurance of present separation for future benefits, from placidity of natural temperament, or reticence of expression, she makes no confession of having wet her pillow at this time with the tears of homesickness. The girl with the blue satin cloak was directed to take Mary Martha to her bedroom, and they went up a narrow staircase, and along a passage to a large room where there were six beds. It was not light when they were called in the morning. She was to breakfast in the parlour, and here she found, besides Mrs. Latournelle 'three teachers of whose existence she had not dreamed. Mrs. Latournelle was making tea, almost by firelight, and she was seated at a small table, having before her some small cups placed on a small tea-board. Mrs. Latournelle had on a gown which always appeared at packing and unpacking times, a sort of brown and gray stripe, and she was

moving quickly, though by no means expediting business. The three teachers sat on three chairs round the fire; each had on what was called in those days a close cap, that is, a large muslin, rather blowsy cap which was to hide black pins, curl papers, et cetera, et cetera.' The appearance of these three women caused the girl to make a mental vow that she would never learn anything from them.

'The first was a little simpering Englishwoman, very like a second-rate milliner of those days; she taught spelling and needlework. The second was a dashing, slovenly, rather handsome French girl, who ran away with some low man a few months afterwards. The third a Swiss, and though plain and marked with the small-pox, had some good in her!' Mrs. Sherwood writes.

There was an ebony 'cat' standing before the fire supporting a huge plate of toast and butter, and silly as it may seem, Mary Martha, who had never been allowed to eat toast and butter whilst at home, nor to come near a fire, thought herself supremely happy under this new order of things.'

Monsieur and Madame St. Quintin returned during the week, and although she was quite delighted with the lady, the gentleman's French manners frightened her. She describes Madame's appearance in these words—'she was in person tall and largely, though majestically, formed. She carried her head royally and fearlessly, and, if she did not use art, her complexion was bright brown and red carmine, her eyes were bright, her nose not bad, and her teeth white. She had fine dark hair, and a beautiful hand and arm. She danced

remarkably well, but with too much of the Scotch style, which was then in fashion. She played and sang, and did fine needlework, and she spoke well and agreeably in English, and in French without fear.'

The morning when Monsieur St. Quintin called Mary Martha into his study 'to feel,' as he said. 'the pulse of her intellect,' was very painful to her. All the girls whom he particularly taught were standing by, and she, a somewhat overgrown figure, taller than most women are, stood before her new master blushing until she was ashamed to look up.

'Eh bien, Mademoiselle,' he said, 'have you much knowledge of French?' 'No, sir,' she answered.

'Are you much acquainted with history?' he continued, going from one subject to another asking her questions, and always receiving a negative in reply. At length, smilingly, he said, 'Tell me, Mademoiselle, what you do know?' and she stammered 'Latin, Virgil,' and finished off with a regular flood of tears. At this he laughed outright, and immediately set her down in his class, and gave her lessons every day. His style of teaching was lively and extremely interesting.

When he was absent, a Monsieur Malrone, a fine young French gentleman, most commonly took his place. He taught the girls with great dignity and propriety, and they went on with their lessons just as usual.

Mrs. Sherwood expresses her belief that there was hardly a period in which England had been more dead and dark as regarded religion than at the time preceding the horrors of the First French Revolution. We may not altogether agree with her when we remember that

for many years John Wesley had been following his home missionary itinerary in England, and that in 1791, which would be contemporaneous with part of Mary Martha's time at the Abbey School, he died in London, at the age of eighty-eight. In illustration of her opinion, she tells that, when at school, seeing an abridgment of a novel she had heard much censured by her mother, she took it up, and read a page or two; suddenly, however, she remembered herself, and laying down the book, she lifted up her eyes, and asked 'God to forgive her for her disobedience,' thinking herself unobserved. A violent burst of laughter, and a cry from the French teacher to the effect that Mademoiselle Butt was saying her prayers, startled her, and she felt more guilty than if she had been detected in stealing.

Her mother had packed a little Bible bound in black leather, which she had at school, in Mary Martha's trunk, and on her first Sunday at the Abbey, after they had been at church, she brought it out, and began to read in it, 'causing thereby quite a hue and cry among the teachers and many of the girls. At Reading,' she writes, 'though she improved no doubt in many respects, she gradually lost some of her simple and childlike habits, and after a while her Bible never saw the light; she began to think less of what would please her mother, and more of what would please herself.'

Sometime during that year Monsieur St. Quintin had a bad fever, and his life was despaired of. Great was the grief of the family amongst high and low, for he was much beloved.

Much liberty was allowed the first class, and so long as they attended their daily lessons in Monsieur

St Quintin's study for an hour or two in the morning, no one asked what they did for the rest of the day. Whether they gossiped in one turret or another, whether they lounged about the garden, or out of the windows above the gateway, no one so much as said 'Where have you been, Mademoiselle?' It is true they were all expected to present themselves at morning prayers in the schoolroom. Two chairs were placed in the middle of the room, and Mrs. Latournelle and her niece, Miss Brown, kneeled upon them. Miss Brown read prayers, and on some days her aunt would whisper at intervals 'Make haste! make haste!' Then the girls knew that the washerwoman was waiting in the next room. It was sufficient for the elder pupils if they entered just before the service was over.

It was one of Mary Martha's privileges as a parlour boarder to have supper with the family, and very jovial meals she found these suppers to be. They were rarely without guests; French was spoken, and discussions on political questions, art, or literature mostly engaged the attention of the company, though sometimes gossip from London or Paris formed the subject of conversation. Mrs. Latournelle never would speak one word of French, but, if she could gain a hearing, she would talk about plays, actors, actresses, and theatrical affairs of one kind and another without stopping.

Mary Martha was spared the necessity of returning to her comparative obscurity and plainness of living in the vicarage at Kidderminster these holidays. Her mother and sister were visiting at Lichfield; Dr. Valpy was having a change of air in Jersey, and the girl was invited to stay with his wife at Reading. Here her

father joined them, and as the three were much attached, they spent a happy time together, having quite a round of visiting in the neighbourhood of the town. Many of their friends there were 'nabobs,' who had made great fortunes in India. For these visits Mr. Butt bought his daughter a blond cap with pink ribbons and an ostrich feather, which, with a white frock, and a pink sash, she thought 'very superior,' and kind Mrs. Valpy saw that she put her clothes on properly.

After the holidays she found the usual changes at school; some of her old companions had left, and many new pupils had come. Two new masters also made their appearance. These were Monsieur Pictet and his son, who were descended from one Benedict Pictet, a Professor of Theology in Geneva towards the end of the seventeenth, and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries. The father had been a secretary to Catherine of Russia, and used to tell many interesting anecdotes of her, but only one of them could Mrs. Sherwood remember. Monsieur Pictet was in the habit of sitting with his feet on the chimney piece, and when Monsieur St Quintin admonished him for his impropriety in sitting in this position before ladies, he would cry out 'Bah! Bah! have I not often seen the Imperatrice in her cabinet sitting with her Prime Minister when he had his feet on the stove higher than his head.'

Monsieur Pictet was much over six feet in height, and his hair was white as snow, but time had not favoured his looks. He generally wore slippers, and a large silk wrapper with his collar open. He smoked constantly in his own study, and under the trees in the garden. He was a learned man, knowing most of the

European languages, and he could read and write English, but as he had never heard it spoken until he was aged, he could never catch the sound of the words so as to understand anything spoken in that language.

He was engaged to give lessons in classes as well as singly, and he took great pains with Mary Martha, teaching her to read and write French, and instructing her in subjects which might be considered metaphysical, such as the nature of the human mind. These lessons, she thought crabbed and tiresome, but she respected the old gentleman, for when he was not smoking, nor suspending his legs from the chimney piece, Monsieur Pictet *père* was the very pattern card of an old French courtier.

Dr. Valpy, and the beloved spendthrift, Dr. Mitford, understood the high qualities of Monsieur St. Quintin and his great associates. Dr. Mitford was then practising as a physician in Reading, and once, on Mary Martha's going to a church which Madame St. Quintin did not usually attend, she was shown into Mrs. Mitford's pew. Mary Russell Mitford, then a child of four years old, was standing on the seat, and was so full of play that the girl began to laugh in such a way as to make her thoroughly ashamed of herself. Mary Russell Mitford was afterwards a pupil of Madame St. Quintin, but not at the Abbey School, nor in Mary Martha's time, and when next they met, Miss Mitford was a middle-aged woman, and Mrs. Sherwood was old.

It was understood that Mary Martha was to leave school at Christmas, and she wept bitterly at the thought of leaving Reading, and her own dear Mrs. Valpy, for she never supposed she should return.

Mrs. Butt, planning for her daughters' amusement, had agreed with three or four families to meet during the winter, and have a dance and a simple supper; and as soon as Mary Martha and Lucy were together again they began to renew their old personifications, and talked in the characters of the Queen of Europe and the Queen of Asia, so the time passed more happily than she had hoped. The next year their parents determined to send them both for a year to school to Madame St. Quintin's, to Mary Martha's great joy; and she was most affectionately received by all her old friends.

There had been changes in the meantime, for doors had been opened from the Abbey into a more modern house at the back of it, and in this way many more rooms were added to the former large range of chambers. The establishment also had changed its character, being now, as it were, two distinct schools in one. There was still a school for the younger children, but they were mostly under the care of Mrs. Latournelle and the teachers, while the elder girls took lessons with Monsieur St. Quintin and the Pictets, holding themselves aloof from their juniors, and hardly ever speaking to them.

A study had been furnished for Monsieur Pictet in one of these new rooms where he could sit with his feet on the mantelpiece without being called to account by any lady, for those he saw there were under his instruction and had to submit to the conditions of his tutorage. His room was full of books, and he had a daily class here. Three of his pupils, Miss Rowden, Maria Reinagle, and Mary Martha had the privilege of admission to his study whenever they pleased to come.

Miss Rowden succeeded Madame St. Quintin in the management of her school after it had been removed to Hans Place, Chelsea. Maria Reinagle was a girl of great ability and accomplishment; one of those female Admirable Crichtons who have no difficulty in learning all they wish to learn, and doing whatever they wish to do. Above every other gift of hers in the eyes of her fellows, was that of her delightful companionship; it was impossible to be grave when with her, if she desired to laugh. Her talents made her one of Monsieur Pictet's principal favourites, but she died young, and only left a memory of possibilities.

It is interesting to speculate on the freakish fate which had led the former secretary of the Empress Catherine of Russia to this home, where his livelihood depended on the instructions he gave to young English girls. The calamitous state of contemporary affairs in France was at the time bringing many ruined French aristocrats to strange ways of earning a living in our country. Teaching philosophy, and the *belles lettres* to intelligently developing minds, was socially a much higher occupation than making salads, or posturing as a dancing master, although in every case the worker gives the tone to his avocation in any honest calling.

CHAPTER VII

School Life

The political confusion in France had driven numbers of the French nobility to England. Many of Monsieur St. Quintin's friends sought refuge in Reading, and were living in small houses, and obscure lodgings near the Abbey. Such an influx of poverty-stricken acquaintances, and the unsettled state of his own country, joined to probably consequent difficulties in his own financial affairs, all united to trouble him more and more, and he left the task of teaching almost entirely to Monsieur Pictet, Madame St. Quintin seemed always uneasy, and she was almost constantly in tears. Still scholastic duties went on in their daily routine.

Before Christmas, Monsieur Bigot, the dancing-master, gave a ball in the Town Hall, and the girls at the Abbey were to act a play, and give an entertainment. The play was *La Bonne Mère*, by Madame de Genlis, and the entertainment was taken from her *L'Ami des Enfans* The great dancing-room at the school was fitted up as a theatre, with footlights and everything complete; and one of the governesses of the Princess Amelia, a Madame la Fite, accepted an invitation to attend. Dr. Valpy, who was very fond of acting, together with his brother Edward took great pains with Mary Martha, but she was much too self-conscious to be a good actress, and vainly begged to be allowed to remain a spectator. As the play was, of course, acted in French, her difficulties were greater.

The large room was crowded, for Dr. Valpy brought all his boys from the Reading Grammar School, Madame la Fite and many members of the pupils' families were present. Mary Martha took the part of a well-dressed respectable elderly lady, with very highly-rouged cheeks. Her companions acted brilliantly and the entertainment was a great success.

The ball was on the last night of the week, and the day after it was over measles broke out in the school. Mary Martha overheated with dancing, had a serious attack of the disease. There were six invalids, and one room was turned into a hospital. The window being open here, a bird flew in and round the bed of the child who had first been taken ill before quickly flying out again, and everyone in the place felt a superstitious terror, fearing lest it might be an omen of the child's death. By a strange coincidence the little girl did die within a few days.

Madame St. Quintin, thinking that a change might be of benefit to Mary Martha after her recovery, wrote to Mr. and Mrs. Butt to ask that she might accompany her on a fortnight's visit to London, and permission being given, they spent part of the first month of 1793 there. With some of the other boarders they filled a coach, and were a merry party on a journey which then took many hours. The school-girls left them in Piccadilly, and Madame St. Quintin took Mary Martha to stay with a friend of hers, who had been a pupil at the Abbey when she was a parlour boarder, and who was now living at Charing Cross. She was most kindly received, and they went the same evening to see Kemble and Mrs. Siddons in *Macbeth*. The play did not make so much impression on the girl as the fact that the King, the Queen,

and the three eldest princesses were present at the theatre. In their honour the audience sang *God Save the King*, and *Rule Britannia*, and the feelings excited in her mind by hearing the National Authem sung in the presence of Royalty could, she said, never be forgotten.

This time in London was almost wholly taken up by seeing sights, and visiting schoolfellows. At one house Mary Martha found the family in deep distress, for a little brother, a child of five years old, had died, and they took her to see him in his coffin. His was the first corpse she had seen, and she felt much impressed, though she was not too much affected to enjoy herself at a ball the same night. At this time she was very fond of dancing, and she artlessly confesses that she cared little for the suppers, or the style of the house where she went if she had only dancing to her heart's content.

The fortnight's gaiety was soon forgotten in the shock of the bad news which reached them just after the return to Reading. Louis, the Sixteenth, of France was guillotined on the 21st of January, 1793, and all the civilized world was astounded at the crime. His death was felt as a great personal bereavement by the family at the Abbey, half the members of which were French, and the other half so deeply interested in what had taken place that it might have been thought that they had lost a father. Monsieur and Madame St. Quintin, and the greater number of the elder girls went into deep mourning.

Among the numerous immigrants who took refuge at Reading, and half lived at the Abbey, was Monsieur de Calonne, the ex-minister. But famous as he was at the time, the girls were not so charmed by his standing

and appearance as they were by those of the men nearer their own age, and especially by the gay sallies of one young Chevalier St. Julien.

The elder refugees were naturally most depressed by the sad fatality which had exiled them from all things that made life desirable. One of the school-girls thoughtlessly striking the first bars of *Ca ira* on the piano before M. St. Julien's aunt, that old lady jumped out of her chair, and rushed out of doors and into the street, wringing her hands, and crying out like one deranged, and it was with very great difficulty that they persuaded her to return to the house.

Among the *émigrés* was one Abbé Beauregard, who formed the desire of converting Mary Martha, and her companion, the other parlour boarder, to the Roman Catholic faith. At the time she thought very little of any kind of religion, but her common sense taught her that, as her father was a clergyman of the Church of England, it would be very strange of her to become a Roman Catholic. She said little, however, and the Abbé was so far encouraged as to give both the girls a little prayer to the Virgin, beautifully written in a delicate hand on a card, begging them to use it constantly. Her friend was much touched, and urged her to follow his advice, but she abruptly replied that she never would.

Months passed on, and Mary Martha and Lucy Butt were to leave Reading at the midsummer holidays. Before leaving, they were again to act *La Bonne Mère*, and after that, *La Rose de Salencie*, in which play the part of the Prior was altered to an Abbess's *rôle*, which Mary Martha was to take. The French ladies undertook to dress her in the costume of a *réligieuse* of high rank.

Mr., now Dr., Butt consented to write a prologue and an epilogue for the play, and all the foreigners in Reading, with their friends were to be present; and it was for the benefit of those of their number who were poor that the entertainment was being given.

The part of *Madame la Prieure* suited Mary Martha better than anything which had been given her to act before. As Dr. Butt had written the prologue, it was thought very proper that his eldest daughter should speak it, and much as she implored to be excused from the duty it was insisted on that she must. She learnt it by heart, but when Dr. Valpy came to hear her rehearse, she stepped forward to the front of the stage, and stood there speechless. Monsieur St. Quintin called to her to begin, but she could not. Then Dr. Valpy spoke to her urging her to commence, but she only grew more and more embarassed. Being used to instant obedience, he was not going to put up with this apparent disrespect, and he sprang upon the stage, and struck the girl with his cane, forgetting that she was not one of his own pupils. But there ended her prologue, for he gave her a parental hug, and let her off. It was given to a more efficient person, and all that was left to her in the play and the after piece was easy to her.

In telling of this unpleasant incident Mrs. Sherwood does not mention whether or no there was any other audience at the rehearsal beside Monsieur St, Quintin and Dr. Valpy. If there were any of the French visitors present we wonder how Dr. Valpy's manifestation of anger affected them. It throws some light on the manner of the time that she does not speak with more reprobation of the blow. She, however, herself believed in the infliction of personal chastisement as we may learn from her

stories. We have heard anecdotes also of the hardness of public schoolmasters to their pupils in past years. Thackeray makes an amusing confession with regard to his schoolmaster, and tells that he had a frightful dream, in which he was a boy again, and summoned to an interview in his study. But to strike a young lady with a cane was surely rather beyond even the then range of scholastic license.

In her old age Mrs. Sherwood still retained many happy memories of the last few weeks of her residence in Reading. It was bright summer weather, and as the time for their leaving drew near they lived much with the *émigrés*, and entered more deeply into their feelings. They talked with the ladies, and danced with the gentlemen under the trees in the Abbey garden, to the music of the harp. Years afterwards certain tunes reminded her of those happy days.

When she left Reading she parted from many dear friends whom she never saw again; amongst them Mrs. Valpy, perhaps the dearest of them all.

CHAPTER VIII

Henry Sherwood's Journal

Meanwhile Mary Martha's cousin, her husband in after years, Henry Sherwood, was having his own experience of the state of affairs in France. At the time of the American War of Independence Mrs. Sherwood's grandfather was a strong supporter of the Government, while his only son, Henry's father, adopted revolutionary opinions. This, she writes, she believed her uncle had done merely from a spirit of opposition to his father, to whom he had always been a source of great anxiety.

The discord in the family became so acute that her uncle went over to France to join the revolutionary party there, and his father, on whom he was then dependent for money, retained the two children of his first marriage, Henry and Margaret, in his own charge. But on old Mr. Sherwood's death in 1790, his son sent for Henry, and placed him at school in a monastery, where the monks could not understand him, nor he them. Then, as he had purchased a very large newly built Benedictine Abbey at St. Vallery on the Somme near Abbeville, he took Henry there, and left him entirely to his own guidance. In his anger at his son's differing from him, old Mr. Sherwood had completely passed over him in his will on behalf of his two children by his first marriage, and by doing this so much offended their stepmother that she would never willingly admit

either of them into her presence. She had taken possession of the Prior's room in the Abbey, and seldom went out of it, and those who wished to see her must seek her there.

Henry Sherwood was about thirteen when, one day as he was sawing wood, an English gentleman stood beside him. He was a solicitor sent by his grandfather's executor to make enquiries into the boy's situation, and to remonstrate with his father about the neglect of his education. As he inherited a portion of several thousand pounds, it was thought much better that he should have an English schooling. His father was on this account more anxious to keep him under his care in order that, by charging for his board and necessary clothing, he might supply himself with some personal income. He not only refused to permit his son to leave him, but he also removed his daughter Margaret from school at Coventry, and brought her to St. Vallery.

Henry Sherwood was now more neglected than ever, and he sought out amusement for himself, making friends with a gardener, who kept a garden for his father about a quarter of a mile from the town; and soon French became so much his language that he no longer even thought in English. After a time his father bought a share in an old worm-eaten brig of 200 tons in order to patronize the captain, and the boy turned his attention from working in the garden to working on board this yacht. On the 22nd of July, 1792, the brig sailed from St. Vallery for Marseilles, and Henry, who sailed with it, was not permitted to reach this port without suffering some annoyance at the hands of the sailors. As they passed Mount Atlas it was

pointed out to him by the captain as the 'Mountain of Monkeys,' and a looking glass was brought to him in order that he might see one. As he had no money to save himself from being 'christened,' as the French sailors called it, Mount Atlas, and the Rock of Gibraltar being his sponsors for the ceremony, he was placed in a tub and water was poured down his back, and down each sleeve through a funnel. A bucketful was then thrown on his head, and thus the christening ended, the captain making himself responsible for the payment of largess to the crew. Henry was a young philosopher, for he comforted himself by thinking how fortunate it was that the month was August and not January.

When they landed at Marseilles on the Sunday, he went to see the Chapel of *Nôtre Dame*, and as he was returning to the vessel, at the corner of a street, he fell in with a mob dragging along several unfortunates whom they were going to murder. One of these men was so tall that his head stood high above those of the populace; he wore no cap, and was dressed as a sportsman, in a short shooting coat and gaiters. He was pale, but he looked down with contempt on his persecutors. A man lowered one of the ropes from which the lamps for lighting the streets were suspended, and on this they hung their prisoner in cold blood. When Henry tried to run away from the dreadful sight, his neighbours caught him by the arm and detained him; and he was afterwards afraid to try to escape.

The next victim they hung by the feet, cutting him down afterwards to open his body, and drag it round the city, singing and dancing as they followed the corpse. As soon as Henry could get away without

attracting attention he escaped to the brig, seeing on his way several bodies hanging on the lamp cords, and hearing the cry *à la lanterne ! à la lanterne !*

He did not intend to return again to the shore at Marseilles, but the crew of the brig made some complaint about their captain to the authorities there, and the people in power at once deciding in their favour, the majority deserted, leaving only the mate, Henry, and another boy to help the captain. While they lay in harbour, the mate and the two boys took down all the rigging, tarred it, and put it up again. Henry's hands were engrained with tar, and were dreadfully swelled. The work being finished, he was sent ashore to look for the captain, who had been absent while they were tarring the rigging, and the boy stayed on land several days, going to the play every evening, finding the acting very good, and the charge for admission so small that a person could almost go in for nothing.

While he was cooking on board the brig one day, he heard a noise in the streets, and recognised the sound of English oaths. He hastened out, and found a drunken English sailor quarrelling with the townspeople, either being unable, or not wishing to understand those who were trying to pacify him. But when Henry addressed him in English, he turned round upon him and said 'Who are you?' Henry replied that he was an English boy. 'What!' said the sailor, 'and serving the French? You little renegade, leave these French rascals immediately and return to England!' Then he left them, but two or three days afterwards Henry met him again. 'You are the little English boy,' he said 'who spoke to me the other day. I warn you to

leave this city immediately; if you remain a fortnight longer you will see the blood running up to your knees in the streets.' He said he belonged to an English brig, bound for Smyrna, then lying in the harbour, and that this ship was employed to carry valuable goods belonging to people of position in Marseilles, and that they had chests of money sunk in the mud of the harbour at the ship's head. Henry could not believe this story, but afterwards he had reason to be assured that the man only spoke the truth.

All the time the boy was at Marseilles the town was in a dreadful state, and scarcely a day passed in which some one was not put to death by the mob. The sufferers were often tried and acquitted *after* execution. It was in Marseilles that he first saw the guillotine, which was carried about the streets in procession, whilst the populace sang the Marseillaise hymn with enthusiasm:—

'To arms, citizens!
'Form your battalions!
'With impure blood;
'Let us steep our furrows,
'Let us fill the gutters with the blood of the aristocrats.'

The people, who considered it their own national anthem would fall on their knees in the streets as they sang, and clasp their hands with all the resemblance of the deepest devotion.

On their return voyage they met such rough weather in the Atlantic, that, the seams of the deck being very open, Henry had not a dry change of clothes for twenty-one days. The captain was very ignorant

for his position, and early one morning, as they fell in with a fleet of fishing boats, they very unexpectedly learned that they were high up in the Channel opposite Fécamp in Normandy, and, moreover, that France was at war with England. A curious scene of congratulations at their escape from the enemy ensued, for they steered at once for the harbour. All the town appeared to be on the quay, pulling the tow rope to get them into the harbour as if the English were close at hand. Henry took the diligence from there, and finished his journey in a baker's cart, arriving at St. Vallery on the 22nd of February, 1793.

He found his father and the family to all appearance as he had left them. The poor people of St. Vallery did not as yet show any excitement. They hoped the war would soon be over, and were, in a degree, kind to the Sherwoods, but the old priest had been changed, and the new vicar had sworn to obey the Nation, the Law, and the King. Henry was then about sixteen years of age, and, from the unfortunate circumstances of his upbringing, more observant than youths generally are, and two most heavy troubles began to press upon the whole family, one of which was particularly trying to the boy. The cutting off of all communication with England was followed by a consequent want of money for them, and the habits of the family worried him greatly. His father was wholly given up to politics, and his stepmother never left her chamber, and was never seen by him, as he was not permitted to visit her there.

After a while Mr. Sherwood was induced, he said—but his son believed that he was compelled by the

authorities—to remove further from the coast. He appeared to go voluntarily as if he were called to Paris, but he really only went to a little village between Abbeville and Amiens. He did not wish his eldest son to go with him, and a poor old washerwoman, named Toinette, offering to take the boy in for a time, Henry accepted her offer, as he wished to stay at St. Vallery because the enrolling of men for the land service had not yet reached the place. Had it done so he must have chosen between the French Army or Navy, for though he was nominally attached to a gun-boat, as the vessel was not yet built, there was no immediate call upon him for duty.

Thinking peace could not be far off he did not distress himself as to the state of affairs, but lived happily, having cabbage soup for food, and sleeping in an outhouse. Though his clothes were extremely shabby, he felt gay and easy, and acted in the character of a National Guard; for so he was called, though he had no uniform and no duty, but parading and firing with a company of artillery. He had himself almost forgotten that he was English, and months passed with no apparent change, save in his apparel, which grew more and more worn, until he had to tie on his shoes with pieces of packthread, and his only coat, an old black one of his father's, was pronounced past repair. The bill for turning this garment was presented to, and paid by him about the year 1820, or twenty-seven years later. He had, he writes, an indistinct recollection of having a red collar to this coat, as a temporary uniform.

CHAPTER IX

At the Hotel St. Blimond

By September, 1793, all the English in France had become suspected people, and a decree of the convention had been passed ordering their imprisonment, so about the end of the month, Henry Sherwood was arrested. He was paraded through the town with a drum beating before him; his arms were tied with a hayband, and two *gendarmes* walked one on each side of him. The poor boy was between crying and laughing, for his old companions treated the affair as a good joke, and he thought they would probably have done the same had he been going to be hanged. His sister, Margaret, who was then fourteen, walked behind him supported by an old servant of the family. Besides the Sherwood's there were only two other young English people in the town, and these were the nieces by marriage of a brewer who had spent some time in England, and married their aunt. Henry and Margaret were marched to the house where these girls lived in such a joyous procession that he could only compare it to the procession at the *Fête Dieu.*

The brewer's nieces were not made to walk as prisoners, but the officers on duty gave them notice that they must prepare to go to prison. Their uncle remonstrated, and received a courteous answer from the officer in command, so Henry began to think that they would all be released. But they were necessary

to the ceremony, and, it having begun, must go on; so they were again marched through the streets, the crowd singing *Ca Ira*, and then taken to the Municipal Hall. The Municipality had so far obeyed the order of the Convention as to have these children arrested, but they did not know what next to do, and went to dinner, leaving them in the hall under the charge of a *gendarme*. The officials never thought of giving Henry and his sister anything to eat, but the kindlier *gendarme* gave Margaret some bread.

As there was no proper prison at St. Vallery, they were ordered to Abbeville, then the chief town in the district, after dinner, and a deputation of members of the Municipality went to Henry's lodgings, and went through the farce of pretending to seal up the boy's effects and papers, which only consisted of a few old clothes, some memoranda, and a book on navigation. The clothes he would have taken with him, but the friendly *gendarme* advised him to leave them in his care until he returned, which they both thought he would do very quickly. St. Vallery is between ten and twelve miles from Abbeville, and as they were ordered to march on foot, Margaret said she could not walk so far, but she was told that she must try.

It was past five o'clock before they had walked half the way, and they were both exhausted, for Henry had had nothing to eat, and his sister had only had the bit of bread their guard had given her. Providentially at this moment they were overtaken by a man bringing a horse for Margaret, which had been sent by Monsieur de Latré, the uncle of the girls who had been left behind, and on this she finished the journey.

Soon it became quite dark, and Henry could scarcely crawl to Abbeville, where they were taken to the Procureur Syndic, who had some knowledge of the Sherwoods, and on the boy telling him they had no food, and no money, he gave an order to the *concierge* of the Hôtel St. Blimond to provide them with both. The food they received was much the same as that which old Toinette had given Henry at St. Vallery—cabbage and sorrel soup, and a thick slice of bread with a baked pear—but, as he writes, he was not nice and so far he got on tolerably well. The Hôtel St. Blimond was the house of an *émigré*, situated in the Place d'Arme, and after they were delivered over to the *concierge* by the *gendarme* they were turned into a courtyard, where they walked about for some time until, seeing a light, Henry opened a door, and found several people sitting round a peat fire in a kind of shed or kitchen.

There were men on guard resting directly in front of the fire, whilst at a little distance, were some Englishmen seated on bricks piled one on the top of the other round a butcher's block, on which they were playing cards. Some old pikes placed in a prominent position against the wall were called the arms of the guard; but they were mostly used for poking the fire.

An Englishman, a smuggler from Boulogne, by name Johnson, spoke to Henry, asking if he were a countryman, and on being answered in the affirmative, he told the boy in English that he had been in the house a fortnight already, that no care was taken of him, and that though the old guard kept the door shut,

all the windows were left unguarded. The rooms were many but they had no kind of furniture, not even straw, so that they were obliged to lie on the floor. They had little or no food allowed, and no prisoner knew what was to befall him. Monsieur Picot, the governor of the Hôtel, had been a tailor; he was a little upright, active, fidgetty man, who had once been famous for his religious devotion but was now an infidel, a Jacobin, and an *enragé*, who made great professions of love for his country, and hatred for Pitt and all tyrants. The letter from the Procureur Syndic to him was on Margaret's behalf as well as Henry's, so at her own request, she was taken among the female prisoners, and as she wished to pass for French altogether, her brother saw very little indeed of her, she being completely overpowered by the situation. There were about fifty English people imprisoned in this 'house of detention,' as it was called,and upstairs in the upper rooms where Margaret was, there were a hundred nuns. Many of the young Englishwomen, who had been placed as boarders in convents, associated much together, and after a time, Henry as a fellow-countryman was admitted to some familiarity with them. All the clothes he had were on his back; he had, however, taken the precaution to put on two shirts, but when the time for washing these arrived he was in a dilemma, and made his first attempt at laundry work on a handkerchief. He borrowed a bowl and began, but, as he had no soap, he could not make the handkerchief come clean, and two young English girls who had been in a convent stood by and laughed most heartily at his fruitless endeavours. They struck up an acquaintance from

that moment; they helped him to some soap, and they taught him how to get on better with his unaccustomed work.

The Hôtel was large, old, and out of repair. The courtyard, around which it was built, was entered by folding doors, and a line made with chalk crossed the way a few feet distant from the door, with another chalk line further on. The guards, who were old men, pretended that the prisoners were not allowed to pass the second line, or to speak to anyone nearer than the first, but this was only a make believe, for all the lower windows opened on the Place d'Armes, and they were like schoolboys in an imaginary bondage, and could jump out whenever they pleased.

Henry Sherwood writes 'that it would naturally be asked how it was that under these circumstances these fifty English people did not attempt to escape to the seashore, and seize a boat, as the greater number of them were young and active men, and some were sailors.' He accounts for their passive endurance by the state of terror all France was in; for every master of a house was obliged daily to notify the number of people who had slept in that house the night before; and bread was so scarce that none could be procured except through a ticket granted to a householder for the supply allowed. There must also be a certificate of the number in the family before any was given, and the want of bread so much lowered the general health that it prevented attempts to escape. No words can describe the state of nervous fear in which everyone lived, and men who were in their hearts of moderate opinions accustomed themselves to the dress and

language of the most furious democrats lest otherwise they should become suspected persons.

Part of a troop of cavalry horses were quartered in the stable of the Hotel, which was lucky for the prisoners, for they helped themselves to the straw, and made themselves beds of it. Henry was put to sleep in a garret over the stable with most of the poorer Englishmen. There were two smugglers, a pocket-book maker, two servants, and the boy. This room was lathed and plastered, but so near to the tiles that the rafters were not enclosed within the plaster, and being fortunate enough to find some boards, the prisoners slipped them between the rafters as a kind of weather board for defence against the cold, and with the straw taken from the cavalry horses they made warm beds. There was a stove in the room, but without fuel it was useless, so they made a trapdoor leading by a gutter to the roof where they found some wood-work, which they proceeded to burn. Henry, being the youngest and the smallest in the room, was put through the hole to bring down the wood, and he was in the act of jumping on a long piece of it in order to break it when the wife of the *concierge* entered. The men and boy maintained a dead silence, but the woman raged and threatened them all until, turning to the boy as he was able to speak in *patois*, she asked him what he had to say. He, 'like an impudent lad,' answered that 'it was their intention when this wood was gone to pull the house to pieces and burn it.'

She left them in anger, and brought Monsieur Picot, the governor of the house to them, and he ordered four of them to be taken to the gaol, where they remained

one day, and then were brought back to the Hôtel St. Blimond. After this their door was secured, and they were badly off on account of the cold until at length they got some fire by another ingenious contrivance.

Their old guard had a certain number of baskets of turf sent every day for their fire, and one of the room-mates made a custom of ringing the outer bell violently as though some visitor of importance waited for admission, and when the old men rushed out in a hurry the other prisoners helped themselves to the turf in an instant. At other times they pretended to be practising pike exercise, and in making a charge, would pierce a piece of turf and throw it over their shoulders to one of the party placed conveniently to receive it, who would toss it on until it reached a secure place where they could do with it what they would. Their guard was formed of superannuated paupers who were able to offer little resistance.

Henry's food was now reduced to one pound of mixed bread daily. This was black and very sour. When the other poor English prisoners knew that the *concierge* had orders to supply the boy with food they had petitioned for the same allowance, and in this way caused a regulation to be issued that all should be given only this pound of bread for rations.

As his clothes were wearing out he made a pair of trousers for himself out of canvas, unpicking the old pair for a pattern, and cutting the new ones after a fashion by the help of the English smuggler Johnson. His shoes and stockings were gone, so he was saved the trouble of washing the latter. During this time of privation he was very happy, he writes, and came to

the conclusion in after life that outward circumstances do not necessarily affect happiness, for he really thought that difficulties endured in youth rather added to than took from enjoyment.

They had always one amongst their guards who could scrape the fiddle tolerably, and they danced away in their guard room, the young ladies joining them under the pretext of keeping themselves warm, and all conducting themselves with the greatest propriety. Henry chose one as his idol, and as far as his circumstances allowed, was in love. He does not, however, divulge the name of his beloved.

Although his sleeping apartment was shared with men of a lower station than his own, there were Englishmen of good family and fortune imprisoned in the Hôtel St. Blimond with him. Among them were Admiral Sir Digby Dent, a naval Captain Bowen, three or four officers called Captains, who were, however, only Lieutenants and Ensigns, and one or two young men with their tutors, who had been on their travels.

Henry soon became acquainted with a Captain Forster, who showed him many kindnesses. His wife was a daughter of Admiral Beasley of Dover, whom he had married without thinking of the consequences, and both being young and thoughtless, it had become necessary for him to reside in France while his affairs were being arranged at home.

Their prison life had some drawbacks in spite of their efforts to keep as cheerful as they could, for the little tailor, Monsieur Picot, sometimes amused himself by frightening them. At first they were alarmed by his threats, but by repetition they grew quite heedless

of them. Sometimes too, the old guard took the liberty of calling the English a 'nation of beasts,' and in this way so enraged the boy that he pushed one of them backwards into the fire. He threatened very furiously that Henry should feel 'the vengeance of the great nation,' but there was no more heard of the affair.

At the end of December a grand ceremonial *fête* took place called the *Fête de la Raison*. It was celebrated in the Place d'Arme which their garret window overlooked. A large platform was erected, with an immense pile of wood near by on which was placed a monstrous figure called Superstition, together with many pictures, images, crucifixes, and Madonnas from the churches. An actress of noted bad character represented the Goddess of Reason, who, with the torch, was to fire the pile and reduce it to ashes. Yet at this very *fête*, such was the feeling of the populace and the National Guard that many of the little pictures and images were plucked out of the fire, and some of them were brought into the prison, and shown to the English, while curses were poured out against the Government for this desecration of their holy things.

While this mockery was going on, Henry was sent for by Monsieur Picot, and found him disposed to be very kindly. He told the boy that Reason declared that at his age, sixteen, it was impossible he could be answerable for the crimes of his country, and that Dumont, the representative of the people, was going to release many prisoners as an act of grace, and Henry among the number. He replied that 'liberty was no use to him without bread,' but Monsieur Picot persuaded

him to take his liberty at all events, saying that if nothing better offered he could come back to prison.

After the exhibition at the platform in the Place d'Arme the procession moved on to the principal church, where there was another platform erected over what had been the altar. On this André Dumont stood dressed in a peculiar dress as a Member of the Convention, holding in his hand a cap ornamented with three long ostrich plumes. The Goddess of Reason was posed at his right, with some attendants grouped round for effect. Dumont was addressing the crowd as Henry entered; and, talking of the harlequinades of the priests, he said 'There is neither heaven nor hell, neither resurrection, angel, nor spirit. A Fate attends us all, we know not how or whence, so that no one can say why Louis the Fourteenth died in his bed, and Louis the Sixteenth on the scaffold.'

When he had finished his oration all those prisoners who were to be released advanced to the platform, where they were directed to ascend some steps on the one side of the altar, pass across it, receive the accolade, and descend on the other side. The Goddess of Reason, who was dressed like Minerva, but with a cock on her helmet instead of an owl, gave them the accolade, which was a touch as they passed, and supposed to represent the loosening of their fetters. At the moment of Henry's receiving the accolade the stage cracked, and gave signs of falling, and all, including the Goddess, rushed to the side of the platform to save themselves.

As Henry was the youngest among the men of his party much notice was taken of him, the Goddess embracing him twice, and Dumont asking if he would

serve in a French ship. Fortunately he did not press the question, for the boy grew excited, and began to praise his country, scarcely knowing what he was saying. To his surprise Dumont also praised the English, and regretted that they were governed by a tyrant.

After a short conversation with him, Henry returned to the Hôtel St. Blimond, and told the English *détenues* what had happened. The poor among them were released, and the smuggler Johnson, the servant, Downton, the pocket-book maker, and Henry, set off to walk to Boulogne, hoping to get from thence to England.

Margaret Sherwood, who was also set at liberty, went to her old quarters at St. Vallery, and supported herself by doing embroidery for the officers, she being a very skilful needlewoman.

Downton, who had been paying his addresses to the daughter of a small farmer at Feremontier, undertook to direct his companions on their way, but when they reached his sweetheart's home in the Forest of Cressy, he would go no further, and their party was broken up. Henry did not know what to do, and in the end was reduced to returning to his prison at Abbeville, where Captain Forster kindly pretended that he was in his service, and he thus had liberty to escape if any chance offered.

CHAPTER X

HARDSHIPS

It was suspected that bribery induced Monsieur Picot to allow the prisoners from the Hôtel St. Blimond to have rooms in the College at Abbeville, where Henry accompanied Captain Forster. The richer English were now compelled to pay a part of the expenses of their poor compatriots. Sir Digby Dent was applied to first, and refused to contribute for a time until threats on the one side and promises on the other prevailed, and he gave his share to the fund, the others following his example. There were few students or professors in the College, for the young men had been forced into the Army and Navy, while the professors were imprisoned, but after a time some day scholars resumed their classes; one or two of the masters being set at liberty. Henry formed an acquaintance with these teachers, and they gave him access not only to the college library, but also to the private libraries of many *émigrés*. He had not, however, sufficient food, although Captain Forster helped him to the best of his power, as also did some of the students now and again.

The prisoners were little regarded at Abbeville, but they heard the storm all around. They were told of Lebon at Arras, of Robespierre at Paris, and of massacres at Nantes, where it was said that every one of the members of two English families had been murdered. Dumont was not sanguinary, he protected his depart-

ment, and they had no fear from him, but they heard of an army of excutioners, and a perambulating guillotine.

Henry was now in such a state of want that he began seriously to think of escape by Feremontier, but his spirit was broken.

At the beginning of the detention of the English, Mr. Sherwood had hired a house at a village near Amiens, and there he retreated with his wife and the five children of his second marriage; the eldest of these, Thomas, being then twelve years old.

In the summer of 1794, a prisoner, who had been detained at Amiens, was brought to Abbeville, and he gave Henry circumstantial account of the death of his father, telling him also many anecdotes of him, and seeming to know his circumstances and his habits so well, that, as Henry had not heard any word from his family, though he had written several times, he fully believed the man's story. The prisoner told him of a man in Amiens who could give him all the information he wished for, so Henry wrote to this person, and received an answer from Mr. Sherwood himself. Soon afterwards he suddenly appeared at Abbeville and told his son that he had contrived to get himself released from a state of surveillance at Amiens, and was then on his way to St. Vallery, where he hoped to borrow money on his estate there, and through the interest of his friends in Paris procure passports for England.

They left Abbeville together, for Henry found no difficulty in getting a passport first to St. Vallery, and afterwards to Amiens. Mr. Sherwood obtained a little money at St. Vallery, and gave his son enough to

remunerate the old washerwoman, Toinette, very liberally, and also to make a considerable present to Captain Forster's servant, to whom he was indebted for much kindness.

On his detention at Amiens Mr. Sherwood had hired and slightly furnished a house in a neighbouring village, but on the morning after their arrival from St. Vallery, Sunday, the 1st of April, 1795, they found their situation there was so unsafe that, buying a cart, they laid two feather beds on the bottom of it for Henry's stepmother and the children to sit upon, and leaving the rest of the furniture to whosoever chose to take it, they quitted the place as hurriedly as they could.

They had no bread, and the children suffered severely, but they had already learned to complain very little. At their first stopping place, about thirty miles from Amiens, the landlord refused to allow them to stay because they had no bread with them; but their second attempt was more successful, for the people here were friendly to the *émigrés*.

On the second of April they reached Clermont, where they saw that the mob had done much damage to the palace and park of the Duke of Fitz-James. On the 3rd they got as far as Chantilly, and on the fourth they entered Paris by the Port St. Denis. No one troubled about their passports, but the famine was raging, and the baker's shops were besieged by crowds, each waiting for the small allotment of bread granted by certificate to each individual as at Abbeville. They obtained admission to a small inn in the Rue St. Denis on advancing the payment, but they could get no bread, although they could purchase *brioches* (a kind of cake) at the pastry-cook's, and cheese and meat could also be bought.

The horrors of the Revolution were by no means over in Paris. Mr. Sherwood seemed stunned by the responsibility; his wife was helpless from fear and want; Margaret Sherwood was detained in France as a ward of the state by the Republicans, because she was possessed of property; and the five children of the second marriage were all so young that they were only added burdens in the family difficulties; thus it happened that the management fell to Henry, who was then scarcely eighteen.

At Paris they were told to go for passports to the office of the Committee of Public Safety, where they were shown into a large room with a bench round it, on which were seated as many as it would hold, waiting to be admitted, and here there appeared no chance of their being heard, because they had not bribed the officials. Days passed, and their money was going, so they resolved to try to get to Geneva because that town had an appearance of independence, and was near to Switzerland.

Henry managed to get on board a passage boat on the Seine, going up the river to Auxerre in Burgundy. The vessel was full of peasantry and market people, and they stood as close together as possible, the rain meanwhile falling heavily, while the police asked to see their passports. Many had none, and Henry and the five children who were in his charge, were passed over, fortunately for them, for they also were without them. All the food with which they had been able to provide themselves consisted of a very large and dry Gruyère cheese. An Italian boy contrived to smuggle Henry's father and stepmother out of Paris hidden under some

bedding in a cart, and they joined the boat a few miles above the city.

The boy had no recollection of what passed for two days, except recalling with disgust the disagreeable smell and taste of the cheese. At Montagne the boat stopped for a few minutes at the bridge, and Henry, running to a shop, was lucky enough to be able to buy four pounds of bread, and he could never forget the luxury his share of it afforded him. Two days after this they reached Auxerre, where they hired a cart for Chalons. The cart was not covered, but they spread a sheet over it in order to shelter Henry's stepmother and the children.

The driver of the cart was a young man with eyes like a weaver's shuttle and dark eyebrows joining across the nose, looking like a bat with its wings spread. At Chalons they agreed with this man to drive in the cart as far as Geneva for the sum of a thousand livres, or about forty pounds of English money but the depreciation of paper money was so great at the time that the notes were scarcely worth a guinea. Then Henry's father gave him the pleasing information that when that sum was paid, however economically they lived, they would not have half a crown when they reached their destination.

Their driver was ignorant of the way, and coming to a fork in the road, he took the wrong turn, and travelled along it all day, trusting to meet some one who would direct them. But they went miles without seeing anybody, and then they were told they were on the wrong road, although they were directed to a nearer way to the mountains than by retracing their steps.

They stopped at a small *cabaret* for the night, and learning that they could pass the Jura Mountains by the way on which they were travelling, they determined to do so, although next day as they advanced towards them, they were astonished and frightened by their appearance. The driver was obliged to hire two horses for the cart, which ascended very slowly; the precipices on the right hand appeared frightful, and Henry's stepmother was so much alarmed that she would have returned had she dared. They made short journeys, being obliged to walk after the cart carrying stones to place under the wheels when the horses stopped.

They reached Les Rousses on Sunday when the morning service was being celebrated, and they were obliged to sit in their cart until it was over, when they were allowed to pass. But on reaching the foot of the mountain they found themselves on a fine road on which were moving carriages of all sorts, carrying gentlemen in uniform. The Sherwood's followed them merrily, for they knew they were in the *Canton de Vaud*, and believed themselves to have escaped from France, but alas! at a turn of the road they came upon a French flag flying from a flag-staff. It was the village of Versay, built on French ground which comes down to the lake.

Here they had to attend at a French outpost, but they found no difficulty in being allowed to pass through, although at first they pretended to believe that Henry was a French soldier, trying to escape from the army. They did this, however, civilly. Then the travellers arrived at an hotel at Secheron, a very little way from the gate of Geneva, and here they discharged and paid

their driver, when they had scarcely a crown left, but considering themselves safe, they slept well and happily.

In the morning they found themselves close to Lake Geneva, and Henry was charmed by its beauty in the fine Spring weather. Mr. Sherwood went to Geneva, but was not long away, returning with money in his pocket for he had met a Monsieur Mar, a merchant there who was fortunately acquainted with a banking firm in London, one of the partners of which, a Mr. Troughton, was a trustee for some property belonging to the Sherwoods. This gentleman advanced a small sum for their immediate use, obtained permission for them to wait a month at Geneva for remittances, and also placed a summer house of his own at their disposal. This abode was about half a mile from the city through the Porte Neuve; there were two rooms above, which were reached by an outside stair, and two rooms below, with a detached out-house, a strip of garden on the cliff overhanging the Arve, and a summer house at the end of the garden. There was a little furniture in this house, and as they had brought their two feather beds with them, they were in comparative luxury.

At this time Geneva was not a desirable place to live in, for the people had almost as much to fear as in France itself. All the Protestant Churches were closed and all the public monuments were broken to pieces. One night the Sherwoods were much alarmed by the ringing of bells and the beating of drums, and at noon next day they learned that there had been a disturbance, and a Jacobin had been killed. The aristocratic party had made their escape, and every person was obliged to appear republican, and wear a tri-coloured cockade.

Green was the independent colour, that is, the colour worn by those who were opposed to the incorporation with France, and twelve young men, of the first Genevese families, who were accused of wearing green neckerchiefs, were banished.

On the 6th of June a remittance came from Mr. Woodhouse, afterwards Dean of Lichfield, a near relative of Mr. Sherwood's, and this was all the money they received from England while at Geneva, though several other remittances had been sent at the same time, including one for Henry himself from the executor of his grandfather's will. The month of permission was over, and they could not obtain a renewal of leave to stay, so it was arranged that they were to await at Basle for communications, which were to be forwarded by Monsieur Mar.

Arrived at Basle they found no letters, and were not allowed to remain there, but were driven away across the Rhine into Swabia, Basle, like Geneva, being at that time under the authority of France. However, they were permitted to stay two days in the town to rest, and as their money was again very low, they spent the time in running from one banker to another, vainly trying to get money on a bill on England. At length one man advanced six guineas, saying 'if I lose it, it is well,' and another lent about ten on a bill; and, after giving directions for their letters to be sent after them, they went forward to Fribourg in Bris-gau.

Soon after crossing the Rhine they passed through a camp of Austrians, and afterwards through the army of the Prince of Condé, composed of French Loyalists. An English resident, one Colonel Crawford, was attached

to this army, but he was absent at the time. The bankers at Fribourg would find no money on a bill unless they waited a month for its acceptance, so they took a couple of rooms, having their two feather-beds for nearly all the furniture. They were obliged to pay the rent in advance which still more exhausted their small resources; they could only afford to buy bread; they received no money from Geneva, and had nearly a month to wait before they could hear from England, and they sold all the clothes they could possibly spare, among other things two pairs of silver buckles for shoe and knot ties. Poor Henry often walked to the hill behind the town, and tried to satisfy his hunger by eating unripe ears of wheat, and sour grapes.

It was hoped that Colonel Crawford might have returned to the camp, and the boy was sent over to see him, but after walking the twelve miles distance he found that the Colonel was still at Frankfort. The guard were very kind to the lad, and kept him to sleep in their tent, after sharing their supper with him, but on his return to Fribourg he was told that an order had been sent to Mr. Sherwood to leave the town in twenty-four hours. This was too much for the fortitude of the weary youth of eighteen, and he cried bitterly. His father was almost helpless; his stepmother quite helpless; there were five small children to care for, and no money!

They all went in procession together to the Governor's house, where they were admitted to wait in a small room, the Governor soon appearing with a very forbidding frown to hear what they had to say. Mr. Sherwood spoke so perfectly in French that he suspected

he was a Frenchman, and said that no person could remain in a fortified town without his permission. They explained that these rules were unknown to them, and Henry's stepmother began to cry, and spoke to her children in English, whereupon the Governor patted her on the shoulder telling her not to be afraid, in good English also, and giving them the required permission to remain. More, he lent them ten shillings until their remittances came; but when afterwards they offered to return the money, Henry believed that he would not receive it. His wife also called on them and gave them a *louis d'or* and a crown.

After staying a month at Fribourg they determined to advance towards the coast, for they had received no letters from Geneva, although they afterwards found out that remittances had been waiting there for them, and they procured five pounds more from the bankers, and started on their journey. For six louis they had bought an old landau, shaped like a slipper bath, with springs at the back, but none in the front, and in the bottom of this they placed their well-worn bedding, and, hiring a pair of post-horses, they started out towards Frankfort, Henry sitting in the springless part of the conveyance. They had some difficulty in gaining admission to the town, and the innkeeper to whom they applied for lodgings demanded twenty florins in advance before he would let them enter his house. This took the last of their money, and, to add to their troubles, there were no letters either from London or Geneva.

They waited on every banker, but could get no information, and every day they went to the post office to enquire vainly for letters. After they had starved

here a week, the landlord ordered them out of the house; and in the end the Frankfort bankers sent them a *louis d'or* apiece, one in especial despatching his clerk with a present of two *louis d'or* and the advice not to linger in Frankfort, but to go to Hanover. After paying their landlord they had six guineas, and their carriage and bedding left. They could not expect to be any better off, so they started homeward, and the first stage of their journey took one of their guineas. The nearest seaport was Bremen on the Weser, and the road to it was not very good. However, they did not stop until their last farthing was gone, which happened in a small village about thirty miles from Hesse-Cassel.

The post-horses must be paid for in advance, and what were they to do? Under the plea of great fatigue they asked leave to spend the night in the room appropriated to the use of travellers, while the horses were getting ready, and here they took out their bedding and lay down on it without being able to afford any supper. In the morning the horses were brought out, and the postillions came to be paid. Mr. Sherwood asked to see the post-master, but he refused to come, and there was a scene of excitement, the travellers being told either to pay or to move on foot. They did neither, but remained where they were, not knowing what to do. Henry's stepmother became faint and ill, and the horses were taken out. After a time the post-master came, and they explained their circumstances, offering to give their old bedding and the landau in exchange for horses wherewith to post to Hesse-Cassel, but the man was sulky, and not only refused to help them, but also ordered them out of the house, saying it

was not an inn. Henry's father, his stepmother, and the children obeyed, and went out along the road, not knowing in their despair, which way they went.

Henry stood crying beside the carriage for some time. Here was the landau standing in the road, and he could not leave it. He did not know where his family had gone; he only knew that his stepmother and the children could not walk far.

A small group of women and children stood around, waiting for the *dénoûment*, and two officers, one a Prussian, and the other a Hessian, came up and questtioned Henry in French as to his troubles. He told them what the position was, and they interested themselves on his behalf, not only prevailing on a man to carry them to Hesse-Cassel on the terms they offered, but also giving the boy two French crowns of six livres each, telling him that, as they were only lieutenants, they could badly spare even so much.

The horses were brought, and even the post-master was kind at last, and the boy went on cheerfully, soon overtaking his family, who were delighted to see him sitting in triumph on the front seat of the landau. The day had slipped away in the worry of negotiation, and towards evening they were overtaken by a storm near a very small public house, kept by a Jew. Here they stayed to dry themselves, and found their Jewish landlord the cheapest they had yet met with, and singularly enough, he gave them some good ham for supper. They turned the wet side of the beds upwards, and slept well without taking any cold. Next day they reached Cassel.

On enquiring if there was a British Consul, Ambassador, or agent living there, they were sent to a Major Legrand, who was said to be employed in raising men for some foreign regiment in the English service. He very naturally told them that he had no means of assisting them, and that in those times there were so many distressed *émigrés* that it was impossible to help them all. More, he hinted that he did not believe their story, and required some proof that they were what they professed to be.

All this time Mr. Sherwood appeared to be too much overpowered to speak, so Henry had to keep up the whole of the conversation. He told Major Legrand that he believed there was a Hessian regiment in garrison which had been with him in prison at Abbeville. The major then directed him to go and find some member of the regiment, and at the foot of the stairs the boy met a man who had been servant to one of the officers, but all this man could say was that they had been in distress together. At that moment Colonel Bezenrode, the Colonel of the regiment, passed the window, and Henry exclaimed 'Colonel Bezenrode!' and ran out. The old veteran received him most kindly and told him where to find his house, as he was just going on parade.

Major Legrand had seen this meeting and when Henry returned his manner was quite altered. He said that he had not been pleased with Mr. Sherwood, for there was something suspicious about his conduct; but that he would lend Henry five pounds if he would give him a bill for it although he was under age, but he would lend nothing to his father.

On their way back to the inn Henry met the surgeon of the Hessian regiment whom he had known rather intimately. He was anxious to hear their adventures, and bringing his friend, a captain in the same company, he came and spent the evening with the Sherwoods, and begged their acceptance of as much money as he could afford. He also proposed mentioning their circumstances to the officers on parade next day, and felt assured that he could get them an order for a free conveyance in the mail waggon to Hanover.

Mr. Sherwood, however, who was hurt at the kindness and attention shown to Henry, would not receive any more favours, and, as they had now got about six pounds, he hired a cart, and left Cassel in the morning, and they reached Hanover penniless again.

CHAPTER XI

On the Way Home

Now that the Sherwood's had reached Hanover they were much disappointed in their expectations of the place, for they found too late that it was not England. Henry toiled about all day in the heat to find helpers, getting into a guard-room among some soldiers and finding a friend in a Hanoverian Major, who interested himself very much in the family, and got a free passage for all of them in a mail-waggon to a neighbouring seaport town. But the driver of this waggon, angry at having to convey unpaying passengers, acted brutally towards them, for on some pretence or other, he turned them all out to walk at Nieuberg, at twelve o'clock at night, and then drove away and left them before they knew what he was doing.

With great difficulty, and altogether out of pity for the children, the post-master allowed them to enter his house and lie down on the floor. In the morning, a Mr. Duncan, who was resident or commissary to the Prince of Orange's corps, gave them a guinea, and packed them off to Bremen in an open cart. It rained the whole way, and they were in a sad state, but at any rate they had at least reached a seaport town from whence a vessel would be sailing for England, and they might soon be at home. They got some food for the children, but Henry had none, and they had no money to pay for their passage, so they enquired for the

English Consul, only to find, however, that he was away from home when they reached his house, and his brother told them that he had no means of assisting them, being so pressed on every side by *émigrés*. However, he mentioned a Lady Irvine to them who was then at Bremen, and had some connection with the British Army at Delmenhurst, and as he pointed out her house to them, they went to see her. After some difficulty Henry's stepmother was admitted to see her ladyship, while he waited outside.

She listened to their story, and gave relief for that day, promising that she would mention the family's circumstances to a large number of officers of the English Cavalry who were to be in Bremen for a ball on the morrow. When Henry's stepmother called again she learnt that enquiries had been made, and that no ship was starting for England at the time, but Lady Irvine had got them some money and they succeeded in finding a lodging over a stable, which they entered by means of a ladder passing behind the horse's heels. The greater part of the day they spent on the ramparts, and at night Henry slept on the straw in the loft.

Count Harcourt, in the British Service, brought them seven guineas, and they took a passage to Brock, twenty miles below Bremen, where they found a rather superior inn for sailors, to which they were refused admittance because of their wretched appearance. A little boy who spoke English volunteered to show them a smaller public house, and Henry was left with the youngest child in the boat to take care of their sea stock. The little boy soon fell asleep, and his brother covered him up as well as he could, for it began to rain,

but at the end of two hours, Thomas, Henry's eldest brother, came running down along the dike to tell him they had found a lodging in a place half farmhouse, half beer-shop. So they wakened the child and collected their stock. By this time it rained heavily, and, laden like asses, they slipped and slid along the heavy way until they reached their new abode, which consisted of a large barn over which was a hay loft, with two small rooms divided off from the rest at the farther end. The one let to the Sherwoods had a berth in the wall with two feather beds, both above and below, while Henry found a very unpleasant sleeping place in the hay-loft.

The next day was Sunday, and the crews of the English vessels lying at anchor came ashore, and made so much disturbance, swearing, dancing, and drinking, that the Sherwoods were glad to escape for quiet into the fields, if fields they were, for a high dike formed the road, and the land lay so much below that it was probably flooded in the winter.

On Monday they went in search of a ship, and found one likely to sail immediately, but the captain asked sixteen guineas for their passage, and they had nothing like that amount, so Henry's father desired him to go to Delmenhurst, and try what help he could get from the officers there. Borrowing a lame horse, he went, but he was ashamed of his errand, and it proved unsuccessful. Count Harcourt, though he was most kind and courteous, could not lend any money, for so many were suffering in the same way at the time that it was impossible to help them all.

On Henry's return along the dike, the declining sun throwing his figure into cruel prominence, he was much annoyed by the rude behaviour of men who were cutting the coarse herbage in the fields beneath. As he passed along they shouted *Schneider! Schneider! Schneider!* Understanding that they were calling him a tailor, he felt very angry, and he thought, rightly or wrongly, that English haymakers would have been more polite. His description of his appearance seems to afford some excuse for their ridicule, for his horse seemed to go on three legs, he wore a *bonnet de police*, very like a foraging cap, on his head, his coat was an old bluish-black one with one skirt torn off, his trousers were a pair of very coarse pantaloons such as the Catalonians wear, which he had bought at Marseilles more than two years ago, and which were now much too short, and he had neither stockings nor neck cloth.

On his return to Brock he found an English dragoon, named Thornton, at the principal inn, waiting to receive some packages from England for which he had been sent by Sir Robert Lawrey. The Sherwoods soon grew acquainted with him, and the transport from England being some days in arriving, he interested himself much in their affairs while he stayed; among other good offices introducing them to a captain who frequented the house, and to a sergeant of the 11th regiment. The sergeant was in charge of some stores for his company, which had returned to England, and between Thornton and this man the family were all taken on board the transport in which he was to sail. Henry firmly believed that this sergeant, whose name he does not give, made himself answerable for their passage money when they embarked.

When they reached Hull they found plenty of money waiting for them; money being sent to the boy also, for his private use. But, through the force of habit, he was so much afraid of being penniless again, that he dared not buy himself any clothes, although his father told him that if he showed himself in Coventry in his worn out dress their family would be disgraced for ever.

Taking leave of his father and the others he crossed to Barton, and took the coach to Lincoln, where he was so very ill and feverish with a sore throat that he could hardly hold up his head. The landlord of the inn at Lincoln showed him very great kindness, and he passed most of the day in the bar. His host vainly urged him to stay with him until he was better, but the fear that had haunted him for months pressed him forward, and he would travel on. Before the coach reached Newark his throat was so very painful that he sent for a gargle from a druggist near where the horses were changed. A shivering fit came on, and a gentleman in the coach, an invalid going to Buxton, covered the boy with his great coat. The gargle relieved him for a time, but on reaching Nottingham he found there was no coach to Leicester till the second day, so he would not wait, and set out on foot. How far he advanced he knew not, for his legs refused to carry him, and he crawled on until he came to the crossing of two roads; one from Nottingham to Ashby, the other from Derby to Leicester. Here he found a small inn, and was told that a coach to Leicester would soon pass by, but when it came it was full inside, and he was obliged to mount on the top, where, a thunder-storm coming on, he got wet through,

The coachman recommended his own home as a sleeping place, and there Henry stayed that night, learning in the morning that there was no coach to Coventry, and moving on foot till he reached Hinkley in a most exhausted state.

As the Assizes were being held at Coventry, all the soldiers had been moved to Hinkley, so that all the public houses were full. It may be as well to mention that in the eighteenth century barrack accommodation being much more limited than it now is, innkeepers were compelled to provide a certain amount of accommodation for marching regiments, and, in many cases, outside buildings were prepared with a large room overhead for the men's sleeping chamber, and a smaller one for the use of the sergeant, who was sometimes allowed to take his wife with him.

Henry's appearance was much against him, and when he went to a public house to ask if they could take him in, some dragoons who were drinking in the kitchen, pretended to recognise him as a deserter. Worn out by illness, and frightened for his life, he began to tell them his whole story, when one man jestingly said he was sure he had been a soldier, and if a French soldier it was his duty to arrest him for fighting against his own country.

In France a suspicion of this kind was a very serious affair, for French deserters and *émigrés* were then put to death without any further enquiry, and, seized with a panic, the boy rushed out of the house, scarcely knowing what he was about, and got into the fields, fortunately on the Coventry side. He had not gone more than a mile when he found himself near a small

public-house, or tea garden, a place where people went on Sunday evenings in their best clothes. Henry, dressed in his old dusty black coat, minus one skirt, his foraging cap, and with no stockings nor neckerchief was not a suitable companion for respectable pleasure seekers. He was refused admission, and worn out and heart-broken, he fell fainting at the door.

When he came to himself he found that he had been taken in the house and tenderly treated, but he dared not tell his history there, for he was afraid, though he did say that he had no need of money. They gave him brandy and water and let him stay there for the night, and in the morning he went forward again on foot.

As his father had said his shabby clothes would be a family disgrace if he were seen in Coventry, his business was to get to his great-aunt, his grandfather's sister, in such a way as not to be known hereafter. He was very ill, and often stopped to rest, once when leaning against a milestone being pointed out by a girl in a passing post-chaise who laughed and said to her companions, a young lady and a gentleman, 'See that drunken lad!' He was very much hurt at this remark, but meeting these young women shortly after at his grandmother's, they had no idea that he was the same poor wretch, and he kept the story to himself.

At Nuneaton he bought a pair of stockings and smartened himself up as well as he could. When he entered Coventry he had forgotten the streets, for he had not been there since he was seven years old. He knew where his trustee lived, for his grandfather had built the house, and it was marked by big iron gates,

and its relative situation to St. Michael's and Trinity Churches, but there he was ashamed to go. At last he found the street in which his great-aunt lived, and walked along it, looking in at each window to see her, and at length he did see her dear old face, and knocked very humbly and lightly at the door.

An old maid-servant, Susan by name, who had been in the family before Henry was born, opened it to him, and on seeing this seeming vagabond, bade him 'Go to the Mayor.' She was shutting the door when he said 'I - I - I am Henry Sherwood,' when he was at once admitted and taken to bed. A doctor was sent for, and pronounced him to be suffering from scarlet fever, and for several days the boy lay unconscious, and when he recovered himself he discovered that his clothes, with all his memoranda in the pockets, had been destroyed; a loss which he much regretted.

His great-aunt was old and blind, and knew nothing of the suitable attire for young gentlemen of the time, and Henry was allowed to choose for himself, with the advantage, or disadvantage, of having plenty of money at his disposal. His first choice of garments resulted in a grotesque fashion. In those days it was customary to buy cloth from the woollen drapers and employ tailors to make it up, and when the draper came with his pattern book, Henry, who had much admired Charles James Fox's colours—blue and bluff—when he was at Merchants Taylor's School, fixed on them for his own wearing. Unfortunately what he took to be buff proved a bright yellow, and with this blue coat and yellow waistcoat and breeches he had a pair of top boots to his knees. An assistant in a ribbon factory

was engaged, half as companion, half as attendant, to take him under his protection, and this man, too, was an oddity, for he wore a crimson coat, had his hair thickly powdered and dressed in a thick club knocker at the back of his neck; his stockings were white-ribbed cotton, and his shoes long quartered ones. An immense, thick, short stick was carried in his hand, and he wore his hat cocked jauntily on one side, so when the two strutted together into Coventry Park on Sunday eyeryone stared at them.

He was soon told of the out of the way colours of his dress, and they were put aside. The remainder of the year he spent idling at Coventry, his grandfather's executor finding him money, but sadly puzzled what to do with him. While he was thus waiting his cousin, Mary Martha, came to London, and he was induced to visit her family, where, through the influence of a friend of theirs, his attention was turned to the Army. He obtained an ensigncy in the 45th regiment, which in a few days was exchanged for a lieutenancy in the 53rd foot, then stationed in the island of St. Vincent, in the West Indies.

It must be added here that all sums the Sherwoods borrowed during their pilgrimage on the Continent were most faithfully repaid with thanks on their arrival in England.

CHAPTER XII

At Stanford Again

When Mary Martha and Lucy reached home after leaving their school at Reading, Dr. Butt took his eldest daughter into his study, and showed her the first volume and the frontispiece of his poems, which were then in the press. Their mother, as usual, looked serious, but she was happy to have her children with her again. It was seen that Mary Martha was greatly improved by the variety of good company in which she had spent the last days at the abbey.

She had not been home a day when Mr. Annesley, once Dr. Butt's pupil, came to see her, and invited her with her parents to Arley Hall, where there was now staying a Sovereign Princess of Germany and her adopted daughter. These people had been driven from home by the troubles in France.

It was about this time that Mr. Annesley's father being made Earl of Mountmorris, he became Viscount Valentia.

As this year had begun with gaieties, so it was to end. When Dr. Butt's month for duty at St. James's arrived, his daughters went with their mother to visit Miss Sneyd of Lichfield. Miss Sneyd took Mary Martha to many balls and entertainments, and she seems to have made an impression on the fancy of a Baronet, a 'very gay widower, who was more than six feet high, and accounted singularly handsome.' During that season this gentleman gave a masked ball at which

he boasted that he would assemble forty beauties, if he had to ransack all Derbyshire and Staffordshire for them. Miss Butt was invited through Mrs. Sneyd, and went dressed as a shepherdess. Her host was dressed as the Grand Seignior, and he handed her out to dance. Though she did not 'care one straw for him,' she was very much elated at this distinction, and returned to Lichfield raised in her own opinion of herself.

Shortly they all returned to Kidderminster, and spent together the last Christmas they were in that town. Dr. and Mrs. Butt resolved to establish a curate in the parish of Kidderminster during the next summer, and return to live themselves at Stanford, but the girls did not look on the proposed change with unalloyed expectation of pleasure, for they feared the effect which the solitude of the country might have on their mother's spirits. Besides they had made some dear friends in Kidderminster and felt a consequent regret at the prospective parting.

It was at this time that Mrs. Sherwood began to write her first published story, *The Traditions* by name. She was staying at Arley Hall with her father, and no other member of her own family, when she commenced it. From circumstances, and especially from reading the papers in *The Tatler* describing Miss Jenny Bickerstaffe, she had a great horror of being thought a literary lady, and whenever she could find time she used to write in her own room, and slip the manuscript into one of the cases on her dressing table. But her father, coming suddenly in one day, and finding the work, was so much delighted with it that he urged her to finish it.

The book was scarcely roughly finished when news came of the total ruin of a dear friend of the family. Though this person wears the slight disguise of a pseudonym, being called here Mr. Smith, Mrs. Sherwood judges rightly in saying that her readers must be very dull of comprehension it they cannot see through that flimsy veil of concealment. Monsieur St. Quintin (for after events show Mr. Smith to have been that worthy man) was in much need of money, and Dr. Butt proposed that his daughter's first book should be published by subscription for his benefit. She was very unhappy, for she hated to be thus dragged before the public, but she hated st ll more the thought of disappointing her father's benevolent intent on. Her cousin, Dr. Salt, undertook to prepare the book for the press, and the subscription enabled Monsieur St. Quintin to set up another school in a small house in Hans Place, Chelsea.

The greater portion of Dr. Butt's relations and friends were pleased with the plan, the only exception being one Dr. S. who differed strongly from Dr. Butt on religious subjects. He came to call at the Vicarage, and stated in plain words the amount of evil which would be done to Mary Martha by publishing her crude girlish fancies. However he could not prevail, and the work was brought before the public before the authoress's nineteenth birthday. She wished she had never known the use of a pen and tried to resist the longing desire which she had of beginning to write again.

On their arrival at Stanford, they found Lord Valentia (formerly Mr. Annesley), then on his travels, had sent Mary Martha two presents, each equally beautiful in its way. The first was a collection of rare

and exquisite plants; and the other a very young Italian greyhound, not larger than a common cat, perfectly white, and beautifully formed. This dear little creature used to run to its mistress like a petted child and require to be taken in her arms, whenever it was in the least tired or frightened.

They were soon happily settled at Stanford again. Dr. Butt had always hoped that he might end his life there, and had refused the offer of a valuable appointment in order that he might stay in the country that he loved. This summer passed very pleasantly for all the family; they were scarcely ever without a party staying in the house; they had agreeable neighbours, and the command of three libraries. Sir Edward Winnington, of Stanford Court, had one of the largest collections of books in the county; Dr. Butt's own library was large, and when his late pupil, Lord Valentia, left his home at Arley Hall for foreign travel he had sent an immense bookcase, and a number of most valuable books to the charge of his former tutor.

Dr. Butt's study is said to have presented a curious sight, reminding one somewhat of the chaos of Bishop Connop Thirlwall's study at St. David's, where the only chair unfilled by books and manuscripts was occupied by a favourite cat. Old and new books, old and new paintings were mixed confusedly together; sermons, poems, and letters were thrown into promiscuous heaps. On one occasion a letter from a friend, expostulating with Dr. Butt on his want of economy, and containing private particulars of money transactions was tossing about for weeks, because part of an ode was written on it.

Mary Martha and Lucy had many quiet resources and pleasures of their own at home. They began a course of French letters to each other, writing each week, and introducing stories and anecdotes into the context, and sending them to Monsieur St. Quintin to be corrected. Mary Martha, too, at this time learned enough of the guitar to play certain tunes to please herself.

But the chief delight and charm of their society this summer was created for them by their neighbour, Lady Winnington. She seemed to lay herself out to make the young people happy. When they dined with her she would send for the miller, who played the violin, and set them all to dance. Her eldest son was always Mary Martha's partner, while the eldest Miss Winnington danced with Marten Butt, and as neither of them could tell one tune from another, or dance a single step, it was marvellous how they got on together. The steward, a big, and in the young people's eyes, a supremely ugly man, generally fell to Lucy's lot. Sometimes an old Welsh harper came, and they had a more set dance, and things were carried on in a superior style. The miller's brother, who came to these larger entertainments, 'always seemed to wheel round rather than dance, throwing himself back, and looking in his white waistcoat, which was kept for these grand occasions, not unlike a sack of flour set upright on trucks, and so pushed about the room.'

The summer passed, and the autumn set in with much frost, and the girls, who were left alone with their mother because of their father's absence preaching and visiting at Kidderminster, began to be apprehensive of

the effects of solitude on her spirits, for Mrs. Butt liked to shut herself up from company, sitting much in her dressing room and requiring her daughters to amuse her. They read a great deal, and got over every part of the twenty-four hours very well, with the exception of an hour or two at dusk. Mrs. Butt loved the twilight, and would not have the candles lighted, neither would she allow the girls to sit near the fire, so those hours were very disagreeable to them. She always hurried them off to bed when they were alone, and they welcomed the arrival of any stranger as a relief from the restraint of this domestic tedium.

During that autumn, to their very great delight, they read aloud Mrs. Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho*. The little greyhound, too, filled much of Mary Martha's thought, for it suffered terribly from the cold, and was full of interesting contrivances in order to warm itself. When they were out walking it crept into her muff and lay there with its head peeping out. It must be remembered that muffs at that time were both long and large. It often got into her pocket, and under her work basket, and when in the kitchen it sat on the back of Lion, their Newfoundland dog.

They had another little pet at the same time in the shape of a canary, which occupied the same cage and the same place in Mrs. Butt's dressing room as the other canary which had lived and died before Mary Martha's birth. Their mother seemed determined, as far as possible, to have all things arranged as they had been in her children's early days, so that she might forget what she considered to be her banishment to Kidderminster.

But a sad event awakened her from this dream of hope to return to the old happy days. One cold dreary day in December, Mary Martha walked down alone to Stanford Court on some slight errand, and went into the drawing room, where she found Lady Winnington. She had always treated the girl like one of her own daughters hitherto, but this day she spoke quite differently, and complaining that she did not feel well, laid her hand on her guest's, and said 'Do I not burn? I am always in a fever.' A day or two afterwards one of the maidservants at the Vicarage burst into Mrs. Butt's dressing room to look for Dr. Butt, and to tell them that Lady Winnington was dead. She had died immediately after giving birth to a son, and the Vicar was sent for in all haste to go to her husband. The year ended with her funeral, and under these sad auspices the new year of 1795 began.

The first Sunday after Lady Winnington's funeral, a very painful circumstance happened. The family vault had been opened to admit the coffin, and the entrance, which lay by the area before the communion rails, was not yet completely closed. The rubbish still lay about the place of the trap door in the pavement, and the girls walked to their pew with averted eyes. In the middle of the service the old parish clerk was seized with a fit, and falling sideways, burst open the door of his desk, and lay the next moment amongst the stones and mortar, startling Mary Martha so much that for years the scene troubled her dreams.

After a few weeks the Winningtons tried to take up the threads of their old life at the Court. Miss Winnington took her mother's place at the head of the

table, but was distressed and uneasy, and had nothing to say. According to custom, the younger children came in to dessert, and the baby was brought and placed on the second daughter's knee. Dr. Butt tried his best to inspire cheerfulness, but so long as Sir Edward Winnington survived his wife, happiness never again dwelt under his roof.

CHAPTER XIII

Family Changes

Early in 1795 Mary Martha's godmother invited her to pay her a visit at Bath. Her father accompanied her to Worcester, where she was to meet a travelling companion, Miss Sandford by name. They rode on horseback a great part of the way in the midst of a storm of snow and rain, but at the Hundred House, the girl changed her clothes and they finished the journey to Worcester in a chaise. After staying the night at Dr. Plumptree's, whose house opened into the cloisters, Dr. Butt saw his daughter and Miss Sandford off by the coach, which was full of passengers, who became quite good friends by the time they reached Bath.

Her godmother never stayed long in one place, and she had a constant succession of intimate friends, who were all that was charming for a few months. At this time her acquaintances were people of some literary standing, and had many superior friends, which was an advantage to her young guest.

While at Bath they attended the rooms, preferring the old ones to the new, because they were more like apartments in an old private house than public rooms. The visitors went here in plain muslin dresses, and danced for the pleasure of dancing, and after a while, Mary Martha was sure of a partner in the person of a major in the Army. This gentleman was killed soon afterwards in the expedition to Corsica. By the time

she was tired of the gaieties of Bath her godmother chose to remove to the Hot Wells at Clifton, where they took up their abode in a boarding house full of French *émigrés*, 'all noble, of course.'

The change from Bath to Bristol Mary Martha found rather unpleasant, and to add to her discomfort, her godmother was growing tired of her company. The Frenchmen, too, were not so worthy of admiration as those at Reading had been. One of them was deeply depressed by the misfortunes of his country, but another was gay and thoughtless, although his family at home were in great distress. In order to save him from prison his young wife had pretended that he was dead, and when the authorities had insisted on her choosing another husband to try the truth of her assertion, she had selected the only man she could trust, an old steward, and gone through the marriage ceremony with him, finding him a loyal protector all through the Reign of Terror. This story the young nobleman told with so light a heart that he was ready the next moment to sing, dance, and flirt with Mary Martha, the only young lady within his circle of acquaintance. With these gentlemen they went to hear Mass in a small obscure chapel in Bristol.

On her return they travelled in chaises to Worcester, where Marten Butt met them, and came on with them to the waterside at Stanford. Here her mother and Lucy were waiting for them, and as they went along together Lucy told her sister what had happened during her absence. The family at the Court were more cheerful, and Dr. Butt had paid the last of that heavy debt which he had incurred by the building of the

parsonage house, and now the family might enjoy the whole of their income, and were to have no cares respecting money.

Alas! While Mary Martha had been away, Lord Valentia had been to Stanford and stayed a few days, and on his departure stolen her little pet greyhound, buttoning her up in his waistcoat, and so carrying her off unseen.

Shortly Monsieur St. Quintin came on a visit, and told the result of the subscription for *The Traditions*, which had been very successful. He and his wife were now settled in Hans Place, and had a large number of pupils. Mrs. Butt was much pleased to make his acquaintance. Sir Edward Winnington was also charmed with him, and invited him to his house; and the beginning of his visit was very delightful.

While Monsieur St. Quintin was still staying at the Stanford parsonage Dr. Butt received a letter from a relative and a college friend, offering him a visit. The two men were happy together strolling in the woods or sitting in the shade talking of their boyish companions. Dr. Butt went from Stanford with Dr. Holmes, as his friend was named, and travelled to Kidderminster, where he was taken ill, and had a paralytic stroke, his speech being much affected. A messenger was sent over to Stanford at once, but strangely enough, none of the family were very much frightened at the tidings, Mrs. Butt herself never anticipating a fatal ending to her husband's illness.

He stayed at Kidderminster for a few days after his first attack, and news of him was brought daily to the parsonage. Dr. Salt was with him, and accompanied

him in a chaise to Stanford. When he arrived he was brought indoors leaning on the arm of his nephew, Dr. Salt. He looked pale and thin, but was overjoyed to see his family, and used his accustomed phrase when receiving their kisses 'Yes, you dears! yes, you dears!'

They led him to a couch where he sat down, and began to talk, but they could not understand him, for he used one word instead of another, and his daughters both laughed. 'Oh, don't laugh! don't laugh!' called Monsieur St. Quintin who was still staying in the house, and they laughed no more, but every mistake he made seemed to pierce them to the very soul.

Several of his old friends came to see him when he was a little better, and as soon as he was able to move about after this attack, he spent his time in arranging for the improvement of the dingle behind the house. Getting labourers round him, he spent hours every day in the beautiful scenery, forming walks and opening views. Once while he was directing a man to cut away a bough which shaded a part of the rock where there was a waterfall, he slipped, and would have fallen, had not his daughter held him up.

When a sick child was brought to be baptized, he tried to read the service while his maidservant Kitty held the infant; and Mary Martha found them in the kitchen, her father too ill to read, and Kitty too unlettered; however, he sprinkled the water, and everyone seemed quite satisfied. Still they had so little idea of his danger that they were planning a visit to Lord Valentia at Arley Hall, under the belief that the change might do him good. A third attack very shortly proved fatal, and he died on the 29th of September, 1795.

On his death their uncle Thomas took them with him to stay at his parsonage at Arley, while they could arrange their future plans. Mrs. Butt had a good income; so much so that she saved nearly two thousand pounds during her widowhood of about twenty years; but she was so much afraid of living beyond her means that she chose the cheapest residence she could find, and was determined to live at Bridgnorth, and when two houses there were offered for her choice, she at once chose the cheapest without seeing either, although her brother-in-law, who had visited both, explained all its inconveniences to her. It was 'an old, miserable, cold, wretched place in the High Churchyard.' They were to keep the house at Stanford till the Spring, and they returned there at the end of the year.

In the third week in January, the family parted. Marten Butt went back to Oxford, Mrs. Butt and Lucy went to stay at Stanford Court for the remainder of the winter, and Mary Martha went on to Bath to visit her godmother again. This lady was staying in the same house which she had occupied the year before, but with a different family of co-inmates. At first she was intimate with this lady and her son, and being pleased to see her god-daughter, did her best to make her intimate with them also; but before long, she quarrelled with them, and became very jealous if any one took any notice of Mary Martha, who had no choice save to stay with her, or go back to Stanford, which last course she had the greatest dread of adopting.

Being in deep mourning she never went into public, and in every respect Bath was to her an altered place from what it had been before. Her letters from home,

too, were deplorably changed now that her father was no longer living to write to her. In the Spring of last year Lucy had sent her sister a few of the earliest violets from a southern bank at Stanford, but this year she had no heart to renew the attention. But the unhappiness Mary Martha endured at Bath was in her mind nothing to be compared with what she feared to suffer at home. Besides, she was sometimes amused as well as provoked at her godmother's singularities.

This lady always insisted that, when she had a quarrel with anyone, she must see the other party, and talk over the matter, calling these discussions '*éclarisments* (sic).' One day in particular she asked Mary Martha to accompany her in a walk in the direction of the Royal Crescent. On the way she said she was going to visit two old friends of hers with whom she had disagreed some years before; they had just come to Bath, and she 'was resolved to have an *éclarisment*.' They arrived at the house and were kindly received, and the visit would have passed off very well, had not the elder lady reverted to the old story, and asked for an explanation. Instantly they were all in a rage, and after many sharp remarks and severe retorts they parted on very ill terms.

Their time for staying at Bath being over they left in a post-chaise for Oxford, proposing to go from thence to London together. Mary Martha found her godmother a very pleasant travelling companion in a post-chaise, because when she once felt herself set in motion she began to tell graphic stories, which were circumstantial and sufficiently seasoned with envy, hatred, and malice, to make them interesting at the time to her god-daughter.

Marten Butt came to see them at Oxford, and before he had been many minutes in the room, he presented his sister with an elegant pocket Testament. The little gift made so deep an impression on Mrs. Sherwood's mind, that, although she could not remember most of the circumstances of her visit to Oxford, she never forgot the feelings with which she received it. She was, however, rather relieved when they left Oxford, and she found herself again in a post-chaise with her worldly godmother, on their way to London. Here they found Monsieur and Madame St. Quintin comfortably settled, and they stayed in lodgings a few doors distant from their house.

As Monsieur St. Quintin was a remarkably agreeable man, and a stranger, he became such a favourite with the old lady that she admitted him without hesitation into her confidence, told him all her family affairs, and asked his advice on several occasions. This pleased Mary Martha very well, and she began to feel more at home than she had felt for months, especially since at this time she had the pleasure of meeting her cousin, Henry Sherwood, again, whom she had not seen since she was thirteen.

The visit over, Mary Martha went on to Arley Hall, and after staying there for a few days, she left for Bridgnorth with her mother and sister, where two of their women servants, and a part of their furniture awaited them.

The girls had not formed high expectations of their new residence, but they were by no means prepared for the comfortless abode it turned out to be. They were, however, quite ignorant of their mother's

circumstances, and took it for granted that she was so short of money that the ten pounds saved in rent was a most serious consideration for her. Mary Martha and Lucy had each private means from their grandfather Sherwood, and the interest of this money provided for their own expenditure, but still Mrs. Butt enforced very strict economy in regulating the domestic finances. The effect on her eldest daughter's mind was to give her quite a horror of the house, and a feeling of extreme depression caused by their manner of living.

The choice of Bridgnorth for their new home had been decided by the fact that Mr. Hawkins-Browne, Dr. Butt's friend, lived near there at a very beautiful place named Badger. The family had not been settled long before Mr. and Mrs. Browne drove over to see them, and invited them to stay a few days at Badger, in June, and the effect of this visit was to make them all the more dissatisfied with their own house when they returned. The Browne's kindness towards them always remained unchanged.

In the summer Marten Butt spent the long vacation with his family; and their cousins Thomas Butt and Henry Sherwood came to visit them. Mrs. Browne took Mary Martha to the races, and the ensuing race ball, by way of introducing her to the neighbouring society, and the fine weather passed pleasantly enough. But towards the end of September their visitors had gone, the unsettled weather had begun, and they were left to anticipate a gloomy winter, and to grieve over the change which one year had seen in their prospects.

Mrs. Butt's temperament was too highly strung, and she kept her daughters too much in awe of her for

her own happiness. The girls, however, were very closely drawn together at this time, and they took long walks, choosing often a retired lane which ran parallel with the river Severn. Mary Martha was busy writing her story of *Margarita;* Lucy, too, was writing something, and they lived in a world of their own, which employed much of their time when they had leisure for conversation. This manner of life kept them in great backwardness as to their knowledge of common things.

About this time the curate of the Low Church at Bridgnorth engaged them to look after his Sunday School, and they very gladly undertook to do so, for their Sundays had been particularly painful hitherto; and they worked thoroughly, attending the school so regularly that parents brought their children in numbers, and they were obliged to refuse more pupils when they had each thirty-five girl scholars, and the old schoolmaster had as many boys to teach.

Mary Martha sold her novel *Margarita* for forty pounds, and by writing it, she says, she also acquired much command of language. The book had a special claim on her affection, because the first sheets of it were written in her father's study, and met with his approval.

In 1799 she and her brother Marten, when on a visit to a friend in Gloucestershire, were taken to be introduced to Mrs. Hannah More, who was then living in Pulteney Street, Bath, and perhaps at the height of her fame. The house was large and handsome, and a footman opened the door; Mrs. King, their friend, was well known to the Mores, and they were at once ushered

into a large dining room, where four of the sisters appeared, namely, Miss More, Miss Kitty, Miss Patty, and Miss Sally. Miss Hannah was said 'not to be well, she was confined to her room, and had to be denied to many visitors; even Mr. Wilberforce and the Bishop of London had been set aside.'

After the visitors had waited some time, the sisters, relenting, said that at least *she*, for so *they* named Mrs. Hannah More, should be asked if she thought she could see them, and they were ushered upstairs into a drawing room, which was next the presence chamber. A little more delay ensued, and then they were led into a dressing room, where the lady sat in an arm chair, in due invalid order, and 'looked at them out of a magnificent pair of dark eyes.' She was gracious to Mrs. King and Marten Butt, but she took little notice of Mary Martha. Having been told that the young man was a clergyman, she gave him some very excellent advice, her sisters gathering up her words carefully in what Mrs. Sherwood terms 'a rather Boswellian-like fashion.'

On her return to Bridgnorth she and Lucy devoted much time to their Sunday scholars, marking each absentee, and visiting her family during the week, finding in this work an object for their walks, besides great amusement. They began, too, to economise to such a degree that they only allowed themselves the common necessaries of dress. They never put out any needlework, and made even their own gowns in order to save money for their pupils. The winter of 1801 was very severe, and Mrs. Butt thought it right to limit each member of the family to a quartern loaf of

brown bread a week, but her daughters never found this allowance sufficient.

On the first of January, Mary Martha finished her story of *Susan Grey*, of which she writes that 'it was remarkable in the annals of literature from its having been the first of its kind; that is, the first narrative allowing of anything like correct writing, or refined sentiments expressed without vulgarisms, ever prepared for the poor, and having religion for its object.' The story had been originally written for the elder girls in the Sunday School, and read to them chapter by chapter, 'and naturally turned upon the especial circumstances of the time when every town was filled with military men who were there to-day and gone to-morrow.'

The story of *Susan Grey*, and the fact that it was read aloud in this way by a young gentlewoman to girls of a lower social degree Sunday after Sunday, is a very striking illustration of the change of thought and manners in the last century, for however much plainness of speech may have been the fashion with some of our later women novelists, they would scarcely take their works into the service of the Church. It is probable that the little book owes its extended popularity—for it is still to be obtained in cheap editions—to the frankness with which it treats what is certainly an unpleasant subject. It is to be hoped, also, that the Captain in the tale is not to be taken as an example of the officers of the eighteenth century.

The winter was very hard, and many efforts were made in the town for clothing and feeding the poor, so the two girls were much occupied in carrying supplies of tea, sugar, bread and butter enough for one meal to

one house daily, and their mother helped them with much pleasure in making and selling clothes for the poor.

In April Lucy went to London on a visit to a relative, leaving her sister to a feeling of deep solitude. She occupied herself with more zeal than discretion in visiting the poor; at one time going to see some of their scholars who were ill with the small-pox. She also wrote two tracts; one of them giving a dreadful imaginary picture of the day of judgment; the title of the story being the seemingly inappropriate one of *The Potatoes*. Of the other tract, *The Baker's Dream*, the authoress quite forgot any particulars.

Mrs. Butt was growing much dissatisfied with her home at Bridgnorth, and in the summer of 1801 she began to talk of going to Bath, and leaving Bridgnorth altogether. They were staying at Arley Hall when she declared her intention to her daughters, who were deeply affected at the prospect of leaving their scholars. Mary Martha went alone from Arley to Bridgnorth to make arrangements for their leaving, and on her return, which was by water, many of her beloved scholars took leave of her on the banks of the river.

Mrs. Butt had dictated a letter to a friend asking her to take them a lodging, and only desiring that the rooms should be humble and cheap. Her friend fulfilled the very letter of her request, and wrote to direct them them where to drive to their apartments. It was evening when they arrived, and they found that they were destined to inhabit a dark old house in one of the worst streets of the town. The window in the girls' bedroom opened at the head of the bed, and it rained

in upon it. These lodgings had been hired for a week, but they removed sooner in consequence of a circumstance which terrified their mother more than 'if she had found herself in a robber's cave.' One evening, just before they were going to bed, a carriage stopped at the door, and thundering knocks were heard. The door was opened; there were sounds of loud voices and laughter, and the rooms above were noisy with many footsteps, and calls for supper and lights. Mrs. Butt, all in fear, summoned the maid of all work to enquire what was the matter, and was told that Mr. Cook the comedian, and some gentlemen friends of his had arrived. The next morning the Butts removed to very pleasant lodgings nearly opposite the door of the Pump Room, and found themselves the more comfortable from the comparison with what they had left.

Thomas Butt was living alone at Arley Hall, and in February he invited his aunt and cousins to stay with him there for the present, much to the delight of the girls, who found in the old hall with its lovely gardens the most agreeable change from the dark lodgings at Bath. They usually sat in the library, over the fireplace of which was the portrait of Thomas, the second Lord Lyttleton in his Parliamentary robes. The spirit, which was said to have warned him of his approaching end, had been painted in the background of the picture after his death.

At the time a Mr. Wright, of Kidderminster, was staying at the Hall, occupied in painting some of the exotics in the hot houses. During a temporary absence of two or three weeks on the part of Mr. Thomas Butt, this person came to the Misses Butt, and asked if they

would uphold him in starting a Sunday School while he, the curate, was away. They being full of zeal, met Mr. Wright's proposition with ready consent, and selected the servants' hall for the schoolroom; Mr. Wright mustered the children; and so busy were they, that when their cousin returned he found his Sunday School established. It speaks well for his kindliness that so far from being displeased at their officiousness, he was delighted. He had been planning such a step, but the popular feeling was then far from being in favour of work of that kind.

About the beginning of October it had been arranged that Mary Martha should accompany her cousin, Mr. Thomas Butt, on a visit to his aunt, Mrs. Congreve, at Peter Hall. On the Sunday before they started, she, in company with her sister, very imprudently called to visit a family where the children were ill with scarlet fever. They started in the coach for Coventry, where they were to be met by Miss Congreve, and stay all night as guests with a lady named Bury, but before they reached Birmingham, the infection of the fever developed so quickly that Mary Martha grew so ill that she could scarcely sit up, and at the inn whence they took a post-chaise, she was obliged to lie down instead of dining. Mr. Butt was naturally much perplexed, and in order to amuse her, he recited hundreds of lines from Milton's *Paradise Lost*, with the consequence that, as her delirium increased, she fancied herself in hell, and thought she was surrounded by men whose distorted and horrid features expressed the most diabolical feelings.

Mrs. Bury had a family of ten children, yet she was unremitting in care for and attention to her guest, and when two of the servants who nursed the invalid, and two of her children took the disease, she does not appear to have made any complaint of the trouble, as she might very naturally have done. Fortunately, though Mary Martha's was a very serious case, the others recovered much more quickly, and the house was again in a healthy condition.

As soon as she was able to travel, Mary Martha was removed to Peter Hall, which was an ancient, many gabled house, situated on the very edge of Coombe Park, in Warwickshire. The Congreves had intermarried three times within record with the Butt family, and she was received just like a beloved child of the family. Under their care she was soon able to go on with her usual occupations, and gradually gained strength and health. She remained with these connections until the eighth of January, 1803.

While she was staying at Peter Hall, she received a letter from her cousin, Henry Sherwood, dated from Hilsea Barracks where he was then stationed with his regiment, the 53rd. He had just come home from the West Indies, after five years service there, during which time he had twice been near death from yellow fever. Lucy also wrote to say that Mrs. Butt had been ill of a feverish attack, but was now better, and did not wish for her eldest daughter's early return lest she should take another fever.

Mrs. Bury was patroness of a charity in Coventry for which a ball was to be given, and as she wished her niece, Miss Congreve, and her guest, Mary Martha, to be present,

they went to Coventry to stay with another aunt of Miss Congreve's, a Mrs. Clay, in order to be present at the assembly. Mrs. Clay had arranged for a little ball for young people to take place the night before the public dance, after which they all sat up very late, and on coming down in the morning, Mary Martha found that many of the party had already breakfasted, and that a letter, addressed by Lucy to Miss Congreve, had arrived with the words 'With all speed' written on it. This told that their mother's illness had developed into typhus fever, that she was in imminent danger, and that Mary Martha was to return at once. On the receipt of this letter Miss Congreve at once determined to accompany her friend home, and in the shortest possible time they were on their way to Birmingham, reaching Bridgnorth next morning to find Mrs. Butt in a most dangerous state, and Lucy worn out with watching.

Mary Bailis, a young servant who had been some years with Mrs. Butt, and was much attached to her, was so overjoyed when she saw Mary Martha, that, much to her astonishment, she fell on her neck and kissed her. On the morning after their arrival, a little child, born in India, who was in Mrs. Butt's charge, sickened with the fever; the next day the cook was taken ill; on the Sunday Lucy sickened, and a week after, so did poor Mary Bailis. The house then became a place of alarm to all the town, and had it not been for the parents of some of the Sunday scholars, the family might have been left without attendance. Everyone who enquired after them spoke through the closed door, and no one ventured to come from a distance

save Marten, who was with them every other week. In the meantime Miss Congreve was indefatigable in her attention, and Henry Sherwood's regiment being stationed at Shrewsbury, he gained permission to recruit in Bridgnorth in order to be near his cousin, but they were almost afraid to receive him lest he also should take the infection.

On the 7th of March poor Mary Bailis died, and six young women in white gowns and white hoods carried her to her grave in the High Churchyard.

The other invalids were recovering, though Mrs. Butt continued in a very delicate, nervous state, and seemed better in the company of strangers than in that of her own family. She, however, gave her consent to two engagements of marriage—that of Miss Congreve to her son Marten, and that of her eldest daughter to her cousin Henry Sherwood. It was not then foreseen that the last betrothal would lead to the family separation which it afterwards entailed for many years.

Mr. Hawkins Browne invited Mrs. Butt to inhabit a part of his house at Badger in his absence, and on the 18th of April Mary Martha took her there, and left her in company of her nurse, a Mrs. Gumm, who had attended her during the fever, and her little daughter, a child in whom Mrs. Butt took great interest.

Dr. Butt's nephew, Dr. Salt, who was then dying of an internal disease, thought that he would like to spend his last few days in company with the cousins who had been the companions of his early youth, and arrived at Bridgnorth on the day after Mary Martha's return from leaving her mother at Badger.

It was one of his caprices that during his illness he would not allow a manservant to wait upon him; and he therefore brought with him a rough sort of woman, who would do anything for her master, but was such a disagreeable person that she quickly set all the other servants in the house into a state of rebellion, and such was the confusion of the household that it seemed as if a total change in all their domestic arrangements must shortly take place.

To add to these domestic worries, a business uneasiness made itself felt. The principal part of their family property was then on an estate, held by three lives, namely Mrs. Butt's, her son's, and Dr. Salt's. One day Dr. Salt said to Mary Martha 'Are you aware of what would happen should two of these lives go at once?' and he advised her to take steps to exchange her mother's life for a younger one. On consulting with Marten the two determined on a renewal, but instead of changing their mother's name, they substituted Mary Martha's for Dr. Salt's, and this exchange they effected without his knowledge. Unfortunately some one mentioned it before him, and he said with a deep sigh 'You have judged rightly; mine is the worst life.'

The servant he had brought with him not only made the house too hot to hold her, but she also made even her poor master tremble beneath the scourge of her tongue, so his cousin dismissed her, and put in her place one of her own favourite pupils, the eldest daughter of Mrs. Butt's nurse, Rebecca by name. She was then about sixteen or seventeen years of age, a gentle, quiet, old-fashioned looking girl, who wore a white apron and a round-eared cap; and she could read well, and sing

softly and sweetly. The invalid was delighted with the change, and his new nurse, young as she may seem to have been for the post, remained with and cared for him till his death.

The 53rd regiment was suddenly ordered from Bridgnorth to Ipswich, and the men were to commence their march on the 19th of May. The company had been first raised by a Whittemore, and Mr. Whittemore, of Dudmaston, thought it a proper compliment to give a ball, which was fixed for the night of the nineteenth, and the officers, having marched their men to Wolverhampton, returned for the dance. The war had broken out again, and though outwardly gay, the evening was probably inwardly sad to many of the party. There was present with most the fearful apprehension that the blooming young man in his gold laced coat, and his enplumed cap, who was one of the gayest members of the circle in the little county town might be reported dead in the next month's Gazette. 'Perhaps,' writes Mrs. Sherwood, 'it may hardly be believed that I have seen a whole room at a public assembly in Bridgnorth thrown into tears by the singing of "Here's a health to those far away.'"

CHAPTER XIV

Marriage

Mary Martha Butt was married to her cousin, Henry Sherwood, on the 30th of June, 1803, and on the 19th of July he had to return to his regiment, but she stayed at Bridgnorth until the 4th of October, only seeing her husband once during that interval. The 53rd regiment was quartered at Sunderland, for the winter as it was supposed, and Henry had taken lodgings for his wife, the company being in barracks. At these lodgings she arrived some hours after midnight, although she had travelled nearly thirty-six hours, and she was received by Luke Parker, her husband's servant, a private soldier, her husband being on guard at the time.

This man had attended Henry nearly as long as he had been in the regiment, and during the whole of that time he had never probably uttered ten consecutive words to his master. The marriage had been a great trouble to him; but he received Mrs. Sherwood with much respect, standing before her in the attitude in which he had been accustomed to salute his officer. He was a perfect martinet as regarded the brushes and combs on his master's dressing-table, and when he had set the dining-table for meals, he would retire for a little distance and stand to see if everything were placed in perfect order. He had only one disqualification, and that was a love of strong liquors.

Contrary to the bride's expectation, her life at Sunderland was singularly lonely, and she spent more hours of solitude there than ever she did in the after years of her life. There was much regimental work to be done and constant drillings to attend to, and her husband was obliged to spend many hours in barracks.

She had very little recollection of the environs of the town beyond the thick fogs, a stormy beach, stunted trees, and dull brick houses, so consequently her stay there was not very cheerful. Dr. and Mrs. Paley, to whom she had the two-fold claim of a distant relationship through the Sherwoods, and a letter of introduction from her friend, Mr. Hawkins Browne, invited her to visit them in their parsonage at Wearmouth, and she found the author of *Natural Theology* 'a most pleasing man, with a heavenly benevolence of countenance,' but she does not, however, appear to have visited them very much.

She had few books with her, and so she began a daily systematic reading of the Bible, and determined that her husband should join her in this duty. Much to her amazement and horror, however, he let her know that he was by no means convinced that the whole of the Bible was true, although he thought parts of it might be. It was on a Sunday evening that he made this startling observation, and she grew excessively angry, asking why, when such were his opinions, he had concealed them until after their marriage, since during their courtship he had never objected to hearing the Bible read, or, indeed, to any religious observances. He replied that he did not purpose interfering with her, and that she might do just what she pleased in reading

the Bible, going to church, or anything else in a religious way. At this she cried bitterly, and she confesses that she certainly did not behave well.

At twelve o'clock at night on the 23rd of December, an order was received for the regiment to march to Carlisle on its way to embarking for Ireland, but as the whole of them were not to start at once, Mrs. Sherwood started her first regimental journey at eight o'clock in the morning on the Monday after Christmas Day, driving in a post-chaise in company with the surgeon's wife, while her husband marched with his men through half-melted snow and fog.

At twelve o'clock they reached Newcastle, and dined there in company with their husbands on an immense Yorkshire pie. It was a gay and interesting sight to watch from the inn windows the excitement caused by the arrival of the military, but a rainstorm stopped this amusement, although by this time almost the whole road from Newcastle to Brampton in Cumberland was covered by scattered parties of the 53rd. At Brampton they were met by an unexpected order directing them to stay where they were, and as they were at an inn owned by Captain Sherwood's godfather, when this command reached them, they were fortunately placed, for the hostess gave them her very best of everything. Captain Sherwood felt the cold weather so severely that he became quite ill, and continued ill until their removal to Carlisle on the 3rd of January, 1804.

In Carlisle orders were received for separating the battalions, so that the reservists might be placed in one company, and the soldiers available for war in

another, and the officers were requested to use all their influence to persuade the men to volunteer for general service. All kinds of rioting and drunkenness were encouraged, but without success, for most of the reservists were Yorkshiremen, and much too canny for the heads of the regiment. The men took the drink allowed, and retained their liberty, and despite a state of license, which, Mrs. Sherwood says, was a disgrace to the army, not more than twenty men on the whole volunteered, and these probably would have done so without any further inducement.

On the 9th of February they were ordered to hold themselves in readiness to retread their steps to Hexham, and on the 10th General Gray arrived in Carlisle, and gave directions for putting in force the order respecting the separation of the general service and limited service men. There was only one day allowed for all the necessary arrangements, for accounts to be made up, and for accoutrements to be examined, and as it was impossible for Captain Sherwood, who paid a company, to finish his affairs till the 13th, they remained at Carlisle till then, afterwards driving in a post-chaise for two days over the old border country to Hexham. The day afterwards General Gray inspected the regiment, and as Captain Sherwood was obliged to be present, although he was far from being in good health, he suffered so severely from the cold that he was ill for some weeks afterwards. Before he was well enough to travel the regiment was ordered to Morpeth, but they were allowed to remain a few days after it in order that he might recruit his strength.

At Morpeth they received a letter from Lucy Butt telling them of the death of Dr. Salt. The last sentence of the paragraph relating to him is interesting, for it reads: 'He died on the 29th of the last month, and provided handsomely for his little servant, Rebecca.' The same letter announced Miss Lucy's engagement in marriage to a clergyman, the son of Dr. Cameron, of Worcester.

Mrs. Sherwood was made very happy by receiving a small box from her mother containing many little contributions of baby's clothes, and many long letters, and some books. She was delighted to arrange these gifts and prepare for her baby. Her husband had been persuaded by one of his brother officers to apply for the paymastership of the regiment, as he would then have more liberty to do as he liked, and he had to journey to London to obtain it, but his application was successful, and on the morning after his return, their first child was born. She was a little daughter named Mary Henrietta after both her parents.

After her old nurse's departure, Mrs. Sherwood hired the daughter of the clerk of Morpeth to attend her baby, and this woman used to sing border ditties to the child. Most of them were Jacobite songs, and all of them had some reference to 'Bonnie Prince Charlie,' but, unfortunately, Mrs. Sherwood forgot the words of these ballads.

Captain Sherwood shortly afterwards commenced his duties as paymaster. He had now an increase of pay, and more consequence in the regiment; he was released from drill, had a sergeant specially devoted to him, and—triumph of respectability—kept a gig, but his responsibilities were greatly increased.

From Morpeth they went to Shields, where Mrs. Sherwood was much interested by a conceit which she was told was common amongst seafaring men; this was perching a small cabin in a tree, to which the old retired sailors might ascend by a ladder, and be rocked to and fro in the windy weather, and so please themselves by fancying they were at sea again.

She did a little literary work in Shields, for she had begun the history of *Lucy Clare* two years before at Bridgnorth, and her husband finding the unfinished manuscript in a cupboard, expressed a stronger liking for it than he ever did, before or afterwards, for anything else she had written. But she was too busy with her baby to attend to writing books, and therefore did but little.

In June there came an order for the regiment to embark in two transports to Ramsgate, and it was settled that she should sail for London in company with another officer's wife. They were obliged to be contented with the accommodation afforded by a coaling vessel, *The Charming Peggy*. When they went to see the boat, the sailors were loading coal, which made Mrs. Sherwood think that the name *Cinderella* would have suited her better. But when they and their servants embarked, they found themselves much more comfortable than they had expected to be. The cabin was a room of a considerable size with a window and lockers in the stern, and at the inner end was what they called a state cabin, with beds placed on each side the door for the two lady passengers. The skipper's wife and daughter were on board, the girl being allowed to accompany her father as a very great treat. They had a prosperous, but very slow voyage, leaving Shields

on a Friday and landing at Blackwall on the following Saturday week. All the women on board excepting a sergeant's wife, Mrs. Strachan, were ill at the commencement of the journey. and she not only nursed Mrs. Sherwood's baby, but also waited on her, and on every one else in the cabin, amusing them greatly with her inexhaustible store of anecdotes. She was at that time married to her second husband, having buried her first husband in the West Indies, and she gave them a full and detailed account of the six offers of marriage she had had during the period of her widowhood. Her hearers were disposed to believe that she was inventing these stories in order to enhance the merit of her charms, but afterwards, from further information they received, they understood that she only told the truth. She had the most decided and dreadful cast in one eye, and her figure was broad and clumsy to a degree; her hair was carroty, and her complexion red and freckly, but such as she was the other passengers would have been lost without her.

The voyage down the east coast of England is said to be as dangerous as any in the seas. There was much rolling and pitching of the vessel, the winds were baffling, and, it being war time, they also suffered mentally from the dread of French privateers during their slow passage.

However, they reached the mouth of the river safely, and there an adventure they met with was more startling than terrifying. Mrs. Sherwood was lying on her bed when she heard a noise overhead, and at the same moment one of the sailors rushed into her little cabin and crept under her berth, screening himself

with the valance. The captain's wife explained that he was hiding himself from a press gang who were coming aboard, and begged her not to be offended. She scarcely understood what was being said before the outer cabin was filled by men, who peered into the state-room; but, seeing a lady in bed, they did not enter, and she lay quite still without speaking, and they went away again, leaving all on board glorying at having saved the poor man.

While Captain Sherwood was to be in camp at Barham Downs, his wife was to pay a visit to her mother in Worcestershire, first staying a short time with a relative at South Place, Hackney.

On the Sunday before they left for the country, they made an excursion to Epping Forest, and passed through Walthamstow, where Captain Sherwood's mother was buried. As a boy he had never heard where his mother's grave was. His father had a country seat in the neighbourhood of Walthamstow, where the boy was left to follow his own devices, and one day, when he was about eight or nine years old he saw a number of people running in one direction to see some sight or other, and followed them until he reached the churchyard, where, being tired, he turned in and sat down on a tombstone to rest himself, and fell asleep. On awakening and looking round to see where he was, his eyes fell on the inscription on the stone, and he read 'Sacred to the Memory of Margaret Sherwood.' He had been sleeping on his mother's grave. If any corroboration of the story of his father's carelessness respecting the son of his first marriage were needed, this anecdote surely affords it.

Mrs. Sherwood took the mail coach for Worcester at eight o'clock in the morning, but so slow was the rate of travelling then, that she did not reach her former home at Stanford until after dinner the next day, and though she was expected, she did not dare to present herself and her baby before her mother that evening. She was received in the parsonage with the utmost affection, but they told her that her mother must not know she had arrived until next morning, lest she should become excited and have a bad night.

Mrs. Butt's custom was to sit awhile after tea in an old-fashioned arbour in her garden which partly faced the road, and Mrs. Hoskins, her daughter's hostess at the parsonage, led Mrs. Sherwood to a spot where she could see the old-fashioned house in which Mrs. Butt was then living, and catch a glimpse of her mother without herself being seen, for Mrs. Butt's eyesight was growing dim. Mrs. Sherwood watched her until she rose and walked into the house to take her cup of milk before retiring for the night, which she usually did as early as eight o'clock, and then went back to the parsonage, where Lucy Butt soon afterwards arrived in great joy to fetch her sister and the baby, and smuggle them into the house; their mother having too early allowed herself to assume the prerogatives of old age, and fancying herself a great invalid.

In the morning, however, she was told they had come, and in her turn, crept into their room to look at them before they were awake. Then followed many happy days. Mrs. Butt had a bath-chair in which she travelled with the baby in her lap, while its mother and aunt walked in company with an Indian ward,

named Harriet, and her nurse, beside her; the grandmother calling to one and another of her old neighbours as they went through the village to come and look what she had got.

While they were at Stanford a letter came from Dr. Valpy, requesting them to communicate to him all they could remember of their father; and the short life of Dr. Butt, printed in the Reading speeches, is taken from the papers written by his three children at this time.

On the last day of September, Mrs. Sherwood left Stanford, her mother and sister accompanying her in a post-chaise as far as Worcester, in order to break the pain of the parting. When she got into the coach in the inn-yard, and took her baby on her knee, her mother exclaimed admiringly, 'How wonderfully you, Mary, encounter all the difficulties of life!' As Mrs. Sherwood had a nurse with her to attend to the child she was often amused afterwards at her mother's ideas of the difficulty in a coach journey from Worcester to Canterbury.

Captain Sherwood had taken lodgings for them in the principal street opposite the great inn at Canterbury, and very soon, by means of their introductions, they found themselves with a large circle of acquaintances.

Mr. Hawkins Browne had given them a letter to a Mrs. Duncomb, who lived in one of the old prebendal houses, and had a private door from her dwelling into the cathedral. This lady's father, Mr. Highmore, had been an author and an artist, and the most intimate friend of Samuel Richardson, the novelist, and she herself had sat in conclave to hear the author of *Clarissa*

Harlowe read aloud his manuscripts, and help him to decide any point on which his mind was not quite made up. She was now very aged, but she remembered well many interesting particulars, and showed Mrs. Sherwood a small painting representing an old fashioned parlour, where Richardson was placed at a table reading a manuscript with a circle of people sitting on high-backed chairs around him. All the faces were portraits, and most of them were of the Highmore family.

On one occasion she took Mrs. Sherwood all over her house, and into a long gallery, at the end of which was a full-length picture by Mr. Highmore of Richardson's *Clementina* as large as life, dressed in white satin, and fixed so low up on the wall as to appear about to step from the canvas on the floor.

Lucy Butt, coming to visit her sister, brought with her the manuscript of their father's novel *Felicia*, which Mrs. Sherwood had completed, and when Mrs. Duncombe heard of this she begged that they would spend two whole days with her and her niece, Miss Highmore, and read it to them. They did so, and all spent together two of the happiest days.

The prospect of foreign service for the 53rd had been a constant nightmare to Mrs. Sherwood, and on the first Sunday in March, when she and her sister returned from morning service at the Cathedral, they were met with the words, 'The order is come to march to Tenterden.'

On their way from Canterbury they stayed for an hour at Ashford, where Captain Sherwood had been at school. The story of *Little Marten* in *The Fairchild Family* was written in some degree on what its writer

then heard at Ashford, and an old house in the churchyard was fixed upon for that in which Marten's venerable friend lived.

They had only been a day or two at Tenterden when Captain Sherwood brought them the news that an order had come for the immediate march of the regiment to Portsmouth, to embark for foreign service, and his wife exclaimed 'We are going to the East Indies!' But even then they were not quite sure of their destination, although Mrs. Sherwood made up her mind to leave her child with her mother and sister in order to save her health from the ill effects of a hot climate.

They went to London on their way to Portsmouth, and the few days spent there passed like a painful dream to the mother who was so soon to leave her baby, and her mother, brother, and sister, and all her friends. On the night before her departure for Portsmouth she slept with Lucy, who suddenly awakened her by sobbing bitterly because she had dreamed that the whole 53rd regiment had been lost at sea, but Mrs. Sherwood says she herself was too unhappy in the present to trouble about any prospective calamity.

On the 9th of April, 1805, in accordance with her husband's instructions, she took leave of her sister and her dear little child and set out in the coach for Portsmouth. The little girl was then eleven months and eighteen days old, and could walk a few steps alone, and call *mamma*, and tell what the lambs said.

The regiment embarked on the 20th of April, and as the Major had the privilege of choosing the officer's wife who should sail in the same cabin with himself and

his family, and he being one of Mrs. Sherwood's oldest friends, his choice naturally fell on her. But he arrived so late in Portsmouth that she could not make any selection of her cabin, for she did not know in which ship she would sail, and she had scarcely time to make any arrangements before they were obliged to be on board. By then every cabin on board the *Devonshire*, their vessel, was taken, and it was only by giving a handsome bribe to the ship's carpenter that they could induce him to let them have his, in which there was a great gun, with its mouth facing the porthole. Their hammocks were slung above this gun, and were so near the top of the cabin that they could scarcely sit up in bed. When the pumps were at work the bilge water ran through this miserable place, and to finish its discomfort, it was only separated by a canvas screen from the part where the soldiers sat, and probably dressed and slept also, so that it was absolutely necessary for its present occupant to retire to it in all weathers before any of the men were turned down for the night.

Uncomfortable as it was, Mrs. Sherwood was not to have it until she was truly thankful for any place of refuge, for according to some rule which she could not understand, the carpenter dared not let them have the use of his cabin until the pilot had left the ship. She spent much of the day sitting on a gun-carriage amidst the confusion on deck, sometimes getting up and looking from the gangway at the shore, and feeling so utterly miserable that she could not help giving way to her wretchedness once when the clock in the Portsmouth dock-yard began to strike the hour. It began to rain towards afternoon, and her friend, the

Major, deeply pained by seeing her in such a situation, brought his boat cloak, and laid it over her shoulders for some protection.

Unhappy as she was, she was still conscious that there were others more wretched than herself. Each company was only allowed to take out ten women, but when they came to be numbered on board *The Devonshire*, there was found to be one too many, and lots were drawn on deck to determine who was to be sent home. Mrs. Sherwood saw the agony of the poor woman who was to be carried back to the shore; saw her wring her hands, and heard her cries as she left, and felt that whatever her own hardships might be, her trials were nothing to be compared to this poor creature's.

Fellow passengers were coming on board during the whole of the day, and she watched their coming as she sat on the gun-carriage until the miserable hours wore away, and she was able to go to her cabin. After a wretched night she woke to renewed misery in the morning, for they sailed for the Needles with a strong wind from the east, and she began to be dreadfully sick. At seven o'clock in the evening they anchored opposite Yarmouth. They had not expected to sail so soon, and were unprepared in all respects. The next day they had again a fine easterly breeze, and Captain Sherwood persuaded his wife to go up on the forecastle, ill as she was, in order to see the Needles, and the coast of Cornwall. The weather was fine, and the sight of a large fleet at sea was truly grand. But the fleet did not, however, escape these dangerous rocks without injury, for the vessel named *The Blenheim* struck the ground, but soon got off again. Everyone

who understood navigation thought that she then received a severe shock, and this suspicion was confirmed when she foundered at sea in 1806, and all on board were lost.

CHAPTER XV

The Voyage to India

Eight days after they sailed the Admiral of the Fleet signalled that an enemy was in the south-west, so, thanks to favourable winds, they made what speed they could for two days, but on the Sunday evening so heavy a gale blew that the *Devonshire* had lost both her top-mast and main-top-gallant-mast before midnight, and was so much disabled that the fleet was nearly out of sight by daybreak. The *Greyhound* frigate however, missed her then, and came back to her assistance, sending six men on board, but the sea was rough, and the ship rolled so much that nothing could be done for some hours, except clearing away the broken masts. They lay helpless till nearly noon, when a strange sail approached, which was soon seen to be a man-of-war, and much larger than the *Greyhound.* Fortunately when she drew near, she was found to be an English prize ship, the *Immortalité,* Captain Owen, who most kindly stayed by them until they could repair their damages; and as the *Immortalité* was cruising direct for England, they were able to send letters home by her. Then, being again in good order, they soon rejoined the fleet, which was lying to for them.

When Mrs. Sherwood had leisure to look about her, she found that her cabin was even worse than she had expected, for now it was on the leeward side of the

ship, and therefore in constant darkness; and as there was much putrid water on board which was pumped up every four hours by her door, and occasionally flooded into the place, it was altogether intolerable by day, and not very pleasant at night. As her sea-sickness left her, she went early on deck, and sat under the awning by the wheel, her usual companions being her servant, Betty Parker, Luke Parker's wife, and their six months' old baby, Maria.

Luke waited on them at breakfast, and foraged for them generally, but the food was far from good. Wretched as it was, in comparison with what the soldiers got it was exquisite, so, by a little management, there was always a breakfast at her table for the infant; and, as if she knew how Mrs. Sherwood used to supply her, the little creature would quiver from head to foot whenever she saw her friend, and look at her 'till her soft eyes watered with a love she had no means of otherwise expressing.' There was a soldier's boy on board, about ten years old, a poor ignorant little fellow, and he was told to come every day after breakfast for lessons. So with sewing, reading, being read to by Captain Sherwood, and teaching this boy, Mrs. Sherwood's days passed pleasantly until it was time to dress for dinner, which was an elaborate function. Some of the lady passengers had been months preparing for the voyage, and they came out in the afternoons, elegantly and richly adorned, to walk the deck, or sit down at the captain's table.

They often spent the evenings in dancing, for several of the band were on board. Mrs. Sherwood was the only lady who did not dance, and although she was

often amused by the music, she was sometimes very much saddened, for the hours given to dancing were those in which she reflected most. It was necessary, also, for her to retire early to her miserable cabin in order that she might be shut up before her neighbours on the other side of the canvas partition came down.

A curious circumstance occurred during this voyage. A lady passenger had a brooch of a peculiar form, which contained hair of a decided colour, fastened down with the two letters 'E. L.' in pearls, which she mislaid, and fancied she had lost on deck. Some days later she saw a ship's officer with what she took to be this very brooch in his neck-cloth; her sister saw it and thought she also recognised it. They called Mrs. Sherwood's attention to the matter, and as far as she could remember the lost ornament, it seemed to be similar to the one in the young man's possession, but still she judged it to be very unlikely that he would publicly wear what did not belong to him, and therefore, although with difficulty, she persuaded the lady to refrain from making a public declaration of her suspicions. Soon afterwards the ship's officer was perfectly cleared from all the loser's doubts by her finding the brooch in its hiding place.

When they crossed the line the captain put off the usual ceremonies until the next day, which happened to be the King's birthday, in order that there might not be two idle days together. On this day, the 4th of June, the crew got plum pudding, and an additional allowance of grog, and old Neptune and his wife came on deck from the side of the ship. The passengers gave them a present instead of being baptized with sea-water,

and the gentlemen embraced Mrs. Neptune, and Neptune was half offended because he was not permitted to salute the ladies, but on the whole, the affair passed off very quietly and pleasantly.

On the 6th of August, when they had been at sea more than three months, soon after dinner, before they had left the table, an alarm was given that three strange ships were approaching towards them, coming as if from the direction of India. This alarm was immediately followed by a signal from the Admiral to announce that these ships were suspicious. In a very short time after they had been seen, one of the strangers lay to, whilst the other two vessels came down and hoisted the French colours, and then began to fire. At the same moment all hands were engaged on board the *Devonshire* to clear the deck for action; every cabin was thrown down, and everything they possessed was thrown in heaps in the hold, or trampled underfoot; all the women were placed in the hold; and the guns were prepared to return the compliments the enemy had paid them in the very shortest time.

One of the enemy's ships was a seventy-four, or eighty gun, the other a large frigate. These were commanded by Admiral Lenois. The *Devonshire* was one of the vessels nearest to the enemy at the commencement of the sea fight, and three shots passed through her rigging, but as they advanced, the seventy-four fell back, and the battle became unequal. After some broadsides the French showed a disposition to withdraw. It is said that Lenois did not show his usual spirit in this encounter; but it was quite dark when the contest ceased.

The hold was a most dismal place for the poor women packed into it, for there was no light save what came from above. There were six ladies and nine soldiers' wives, a negro female servant of Colonel Carr's, one or two Madras ayahs, two children, the boy Mrs. Sherwood was trying to teach, and little Maria Parker. This child was popped into Mrs. Sherwood's arms while her mother tried to collect their possessions, which were scattered in the hold, and her mistress could not help wondering at her presence of mind in being able to think of such matters at such a time. However, she had reason afterwards to be thankful for Betty Parker's care.

They were then considerably under water-mark, and quite certain that nothing could save them if anything befell the ship, for the ladders had been taken away; but there was no fainting nor screaming among them. It was perfectly dark when they were told that all was over, and no mischief done to the *Devonshire;* and then, without waiting for the ladders, the men began to hoist up the women, lifting them from one man to another as if they had been so many bales of goods. When on deck the ladies all repaired to Colonel Carr's cabin, where they much enjoyed some negus and biscuits.

At daylight on the 8th of August the French were no longer in sight, and the captain of the *Devonshire* sent on board the different ships to learn what damage had been done. The riggings of the *Hope* and the *Cumberland* had been much cut; a Mr. Cook on board the *Blenheim* was killed; a private of the 67th had lost his life on board the *Ganges*, and a sergeant of the 53rd had had both his legs taken off on board the

Dorsetshire. From that time they heard no more of the French, but they learned afterwards that they had made Lenois suffer so severely that he was glad to get away from them; and that the man-of-war was the *Marengo* of eighty guns, and the frigate *La Belle Poule* of forty guns.

After this alarm Mrs. Sherwood says that she began to anticipate the end of their voyage with delight. At daylight on the 22nd of August they were off Pondicherry at the distance of about six miles, and on the morning of the 23rd they found themselves close to Madras.

Here they were surprised to see several black men sitting in the sea on logs of wood, for although they had been associated for the last four months with people who had come from Madras, they had never volunteered any information about the place, and had even answered inquiries by grossly absurd assertions; telling, for example, that tigers were so common there that they often made their way into the fort, and ran away with the children. Thus they were quite unprepared for seeing the natives riding on their catamarans, as these logs are named, from the shore. Some of these men brought letters from land, well secured from the wet in their conical caps, for the surf off Madras is so violent that the first three waves had to be dived under after leaving the shore.

Captain Sherwood went on shore this day, and he describes the experience thus: 'I had heard a bad account of the surf at Madras, but, seeing the ships around anchored in such calm water, I began to fancy that the old Indians on board the *Devonshire* had been laughing at our expense, yet the make of the boat in

which I was to land seemed to me to be somewhat suspicious. It was formed without a keel, flat bottomed, with the sides raised high, and the boards of which it was composed were sewed loosely together with the fibres of the cocoanut tree, caulked with the same material; and we had two catamarans to attend it, no doubt in case of danger. As we approached the shore I began to perceive that there was need indeed for all these preparations. The roaring of the waves became tremendous, and before we entered the surf, the boatmen stopped as if to prepare themselves, and having taken breath, they began to howl and shriek, or rather to keep time to the oars by a horrid sound, whilst they pulled very short. At the same instant we rose up as if on a mountain, the boat standing almost perpendicular with her fore-part downwards, and thus we were hurried along upon the wave, the situation of the boat being suddenly reversed, after which we were left to lie in the trough of the sea till another wave met us; this was repeated three times, and on the third time we struck on the top of the wave on the shore with such a tremendous shock, that had we not been on our guard, we should all inevitably have been dashed out. Now we had reached the shore about one hundred persons seized the boat, and by main strength pulled her up into safe mooring; but not until another wave had come and given us a more copious sprinkling. On returning the surf was even worse than when I landed; and for this reason, that on going on shore the boat has the advantage of running before, or with the breakers, but in going off it has, in a certain degree, to contend with them.'

To Mrs. Sherwood the whole scene of landing appeared full of terror and confusion, and its ill effect was so overpowering that she had no time to analyze a single feeling. She was instantly assisted to get out, and found herself standing on solid ground, and in all this new world there was not one object of a familiar description. Captain Sherwood was busy in seeing some of their property carried from the boat, and his wife had scarcely looked round when a close carriage of English appearance with a pair of horses, a black coachman, and several native servants, who had been sent to the beach to meet an English lady, came up and insisted on taking possession of her. She could not understand them, nor they her, but they would not give her up until an Indian attendant, whom Captain Sherwood had hired the day before, came to her relief with a palanquin, and ran by her side to the Fort.

Two immense ground-floor apartments were appointed for their use there. They were much larger than many country churches, which they much resembled, for the beams of the roof were visible, and there were many large windows closed with jalousies. The Indian servant, named a *Debash*, managed everything for them, and had provided such inferior servants as might be required. He had a kitchen and offices behind these rooms, and served them with dinner on their camp table, a meal consisting of many dishes then new to Mrs. Sherwood, which, however, she found very palatable. Among others were a soup made of a gelatinous vegetable and the egg plant roasted before the fire, and garnished with bread crumbs.

As they had no security of remaining a week at Madras they did not think it worth while to procure furniture, and made the best of what they had, namely, a camp table, a few chairs, a canteen, a sea-cot, and a great many trunks and chests. Mrs. Parker had gone with her husband and child to the soldiers' quarters, and Mrs. Sherwood was left alone for the first night to make the sea-cot as comfortable as she could, for as yet she had no female servant.

It was placed at one end of the vast sleeping room, and they went early to bed, having neglected to provide themselves with lights, but they were by no means prepared for the multitude of companions with whom they were to spend the night. These soon made them aware of their presence in many ways. In the first place there was a sound like the whirr of a spinning wheel, then a click-click like a clock; an occasional squeak which suggested the unpleasant idea of a rat; then a buzz as of a fly; and the small, hollow, and tormenting note of the mosquito's horn. They composed themselves to sleep, however, and when they awoke in the morning the light was streaming through the jalousies, and several elegant little black and white squirrels, called gillaries, were sporting up and down the woodwork.

They had scarcely breakfasted on the day after their arrival in Madras before they were told to hold themselves in readiness to go on to Bengal. So there was no use in trying to make their rooms more comfortable, but they were able to have their clothes washed, and were delighted when the linen, which had been deplorably stained and iron-moulded in their

ill-conditioned cabin, came back whiter than the driven snow itself.

After ten days on shore they again embarked in the *Devonshire*, and proceeded up the bay, anchoring in Diamond Bay on the 11th of September, where, finding the shore low and swampy, Captain Sherwood asked for leave to go on to Calcutta, and hired a boat to take them at once. The boatmen could not understand him, and he could not understand them when they desired to know where he wished to land, and after strenuous efforts on both sides, and much jabbering and talking, a boat with a white man approached, and Captain Sherwood was thankful for his services as interpreter. Then he followed his goods to the custom house while his wife was conducted by a black servant to an inn—*The Crown and Anchor*—whose comparative quiet was most grateful to her.

The following day Captain Sherwood got two immense apartments for them in Fort William, and a native broker providing them with all the furniture they required, they were comfortably settled there before night, together with a staff of servants which amounted to fifteen when the six palanquin bearers were counted, although, as yet they were not considered to have commenced housekeeping. These included a *Khitmutghar*, or house steward, a *Mussulchee*, to wait on the *Khitmutghar*, a *Behishtee*, or water carrier, a *Matranee*, or female servant, a *Sirdar* Bearer, or Prince of the Bearers, his mate, and six other palanquin bearers, a *Dobi*, or washer-woman, a cook, and a *Circar*, or banker. These servants cost about £10 17s. 3d. a month.

Their stay at Calcutta only lasted four weeks, for they were ordered up country to Dinapore, for which place they started on a Saturday. Little Maria Parker was dying, and her father obtained permission to remain behind for two days, but the child died on the second morning, and was buried within an hour.

When the boats were anchored for the night, Captain and Mrs. Sherwood generally walked about on shore, and in this way saw much of the country, the natives following them by hundreds. In 1805 the English were not so well known in India as they now are. The heat soon became oppressive, but they found the country very pleasant, with groves of mango trees covering large tracts of ground. They had great difficulty in making themselves understood, even through their *Khitmutghar*, who professed to be their interpreter, for when they asked him a question which he could not comprehend, his invariable answer was 'Yes.' His mode of replying to their enquiries was very quaint and curious; for example, when they asked him how far it was to Plassy, he said 'Cutwa Plassy,' meaning one day to Cutwa, and the next to Plassy. At Plassy they saw many fine trees and Hindoo temples, but the great interest of the place to them lay in the fact that it was the scene of Lord Clive's victory over Surajah Dowlah, the Nawaub of Bengal, from which may be dated the real commencement of the English power in India.

As the season advanced, and they went further up the river, they experienced a great change in the temperature, and the servants at the top of the pinnace were glad to wrap themselves up in thick cotton quilts.

They had brought a little native boy with them as a helper to their *Khitmutghar*, and one morning he came in with a troubled face and told them sadly 'that all the butter—the salted European butter which they had bought from Calcutta—was spoilt, utterly spoilt.' The cold of the past night had hardened it, and as the child had never before seen it in a solid state he was quite sure it had gone bad.

CHAPTER XVI

The Death of Little Henry

It was at Dinapore that the Sherwoods first actually began to feel what Indian luxuries were. The *Khitmutghar* they had brought with them from Calcutta, left them as soon as they were settled. They parted good friends, for he had not been guilty of any special extortion, although he had charged as much weekly for the onions he put in their curries as would have filled a good sized cart. In his place they took other servants. Captain Sherwood got a pony, and his wife had a *tonjon* or open palanquin, in which she rode, having put aside her bonnet for a lace cap with European ribbons.

Their first son, and second child, was born at Dinapore on Christmas Day. Before his birth she had been much exercised in her mind lest the child should not receive Christian Baptism. A year and a half before, when she was staying with her mother in Worcestershire, just as they were about to sit down to dinner, her brother Marten being with them, a person came to beg him to go immediately to Abberley to christen a dying child; Mr. Severne, who was the proper clergyman, being from home. Marten Butt thought he would dine before he obeyed the summons, and the

child died before he arrived. When Mrs. Sherwood and her sister were alone after this event, Lucy asked, 'If the soul of that child is lost on account of Marten's delay, how can he ever forgive himself for this neglect of duty?' Happily there was a chaplain at Dinapore, and her fears, foolish as she afterwards judged them to have been, were set at rest by means of his ministrations.

There was then no church at Dinapore, and service was celebrated in a wide and lofty room, having numbers of double doors of green lattice work in it, and with no other furniture than forms for the inferior persons, and chairs and footstools for the superiors, placed there by their own servants. There was no pulpit, nor desk, but the preacher stood before a table. The soldiers' wives all attended service dressed completely in white, with caps instead of bonnets, many of them looking very well. They had to walk to church, and as they were, of course, obliged to protect their heads from the sun, they carried painted umbrellas with them.

When the service was over, the officers came, as usual, to settle their affairs, and even the clergyman not unseldom called to take tiffin, as the hot luncheon was called, with the Sherwood's. The first time he honoured them in this way he sat with Mrs. Sherwood on the verandah, and seeing some travelling pedlars passing by, he called them in, made them display their wares on the floor, and amused himself by bargaining for any small article he fancied. As paymaster, Captain Sherwood used to transact regimental business after church, with the *Circar*, or banker, sitting in a corner of the room, on his carpet, weighing the money which was

kept in an iron chest in their quarters, and Sergeant Clarke, the paymaster's assistant, stood beside him ready to write down the accounts. Mrs. Sherwood persuaded her husband not to see the officers on a Sunday, and as the only plan which he could think of to avoid them was by dismissing the *Circar* and going out himself, he used to visit some other officer soon after breakfast and spend the day there, leaving his wife with the companionship of the baby.

The week days were more cheerful. It was then a custom with Europeans in the Indian provinces to have whatever carriages they kept paraded before their doors in the cool of the evening, and the Sherwood's were already so Indian that they had their bullock carriage, their palanquin, and a riding horse paraded in front of the house. The bullock coach, with a fine silver-grey pair was usually appropriated to the boy and his nurse; Mrs. Sherwood and her friend Mrs. Mawby, the wife of the Colonel of the company, took their airing in an open palanquin, and much amused they were by the scenes they saw in passing through the bazaars.

The Hindoo women in and about Dinapore were exceptionally dirty. Mrs. Sherwood thought the very dirtiest she ever saw in India. After describing their dress of a single web of coarse cotton so arranged as to form a petticoat, and a veil, she writes, 'This is a most beautiful arrangement of drapery for a picture or a statue, or for a young and delicate girl, but for the old and ugly, most disgusting. In many parts of India the women dress their hair neatly, not so at Dinapore, neither do they trouble themselves to wash

their clothes. They wear silver and glass bangles, armlets, bracelets, and anklets, with nose jewels; and their ear-rings are so heavy and so numerous that the ears are often quite dragged down. The feet are bare, but their walk is graceful. They carry everything but their children on their heads and shoulders. The little ones they set astride upon their hips. The huts at Dinapore consist generally of one apartment. They are commonly clay built, and arranged in groups without order. No furniture is needed but a bamboo bedstead laced with cord, and brass or earthen pots in the form of the bell of a hyacinth. They cook out of doors. Their food is simple and their wants few. If they need a house, they build the walls with mud and buy a thatched roof, double-leaved, which, being perched upon the walls, completes the edifice.'

The regiment was ordered to Berhampore to make room for some troops which were leaving the field, and the Sherwoods procured a sixteen-oared budgerow for their own conveyance, and got leave to drop down the river before the fleet, leaving Dinapore by the 1st of July and hearing that the regiment would sail on the 6th. But the wind was so high from the east that Captain Sherwood thought it impossible they would attempt to move, and on the strength of this persuasion, engaged himself to dine out at Diga. Greatly to their astonishment, however, next morning about ten o'clock they saw the whole fleet in the middle of the river, scattered by the gale, and though the current was very strong, making very little way. They were at length compelled to run to the shore, but not until two boats had been lost, although the persons in them were

saved. It took the next day to repair the damage done by the storm. When their budgerow got into the river she rolled so much that they were afraid of her sinking, and when they reached Patna, where the river took a sweep to the eastward and they lost all protection from the shore, they lay rolling for three hours, the current forcing them down, and the wind, with equal violence, driving them upwards. When at last they reached Berhampore, having made a voyage of three hundred and eighty miles, including windings, in eight days, they considered that they had endured more perils in that time than in the whole of their voyage from England.

Immediately on their arrival at Berhampore they received letters from home, which cost them upwards of two guineas for postage, having been sent to Madras and following them hence.

Mrs. Sherwood had started a school for the children of the regiment when at Dinapore, Sergeant Clarke, the paymaster's assistant, helping by teaching the boys; and as they received part of another regiment, with several coloured children, at Berhampore, she found teaching very exhausting work in the excessive heat.

Early in September all the Europeans of a certain rank in the cantonment received an invitation in a note, written in Persian, on paper sprinkled with gold, from the Nawaub of Bengal to sup with him in his palace at Moorshedabad, and to see the yearly illuminations on the occasion of the river having passed its height. Mrs. Sherwood was much interested in the magnificent fireworks, but the rest of the entertainment, the singing of the Nawaub's praises by dancing Nautch girls, and

the drolleries of his jesters, she found very dull. Every guest received a drop of attar of roses thrown upon him, and a collar of jasmine, sandalwood, and silver tinsel, with a little betel nut wrapped in leaves, and Mrs. Sherwood concludes her account by saying that it was altogether a most delightful and interesting expedition, a little bright spot in her life of which she had no small pleasure in renewing the recollection.

Very soon after this entertainment the nurse took Mrs. Sherwood's little son Henry to a Poojah (idolatrous service) and brought him home with a mark daubed on his forehead. His mother was dreadfully distressed and sobbed and cried bitterly, suggesting to the chaplain, who happened to call at the time, that the baby should be christened again, and he had some difficulty in removing her terrors.

This nurse also surreptitiously dosed the little boy with opium one morning, and the child lay in so deep a sleep for twelve hours that he seemed almost dead, with his feet and hands becoming colder and colder, and although he gradually recovered, the doctor Mrs. Sherwood had summoned said that it was evidently not the first time that he had been drugged. After this another nurse was procured for the infant, a black woman to whom he had taken a great fancy, and who walked up and down with him incessantly through the day, singing a Hindoostanee lullaby, the translation of which reads:—

Sleep make baby,
Sleep make;
Sleep little baby
Sleep oh! oh!
Golden is thy bed

Of silk are thy curtains,
From Cabul the Mogul woman comes
To make my master sleep.

This woman had once been a dancing and singing girl, and had a sweet voice, and a most affectionate nature. For hours and hours she used to pace the verandah with the child in her arms, and his mother often spent above half the night in the same way. Some months after little Henry died the Sherwoods were sailing down the river on their way to Cawnpore when they halted at Diga, where the bank rose greenly and smoothly from the water with a single tree growing on it. Under its shade sat a native woman with several gaudy toys lying beside her; she was Henry's nurse, who had heard of their approach, and sat there waiting to see her boy.

To the end of her life the remembrance of this scene made the bereaved mother fall into a fit of weeping.

On the 26th of March, 1807, Mrs. Sherwood's third child, a little girl, was born, to whom she gave the names of Lucy Martha. As Henry was ill with the whooping cough, his mother was obliged to leave him in the care of his nurse, but often through the night she heard him calling for his own mama until at length the cry of 'Oh Mamma! Mamma!' was hushed through the persevering lullaby. After a few days his attendants brought him so that his mother should see him through the glass windows, and he looked at her with a sweet and tender smile. But in spite of all their care he died in July, and the grief of this loss was never forgotten by his parents.*

* When he was dying his last words were 'Oh, Mamma, Mamma, remember Henry!'

One of Mrs. Sherwood's acquaintances, a Mrs. Sturt, had a boy a little older than Henry, and this child had been so delicate that she had come into the cantonment with him in order to be near medical assistance. He suffered from convulsions, and was so ill in one of his attacks that his coffin was ordered and made, since he was supposed to be dead. This coffin was used for little Henry Sherwood. Some time after his death, his mother met Mrs. Sturt at a dinner party, and her little pale-faced boy came running into the drawing room, and stood close to Mrs. Sherwood, leaning against her while Mrs. Sturt told the lady on the other side 'that he had lately been so terribly ill that his coffin had been ordered and made; indeed, he had been supposed to be dead.' The recollection was too overwhelmingly painful for Mrs. Sherwood, and much to the surprise of her friends, she had an hysterical attack.

'Oh, that coffin,' she cried, 'oh, that coffin,' and she sobbed bitterly, while her friends were greatly affected, and did all they could to console her when they learned that her little son had occupied the coffin from which the other child had been saved.

Little Lucy, then three months old, was her mother's greatest earthly consolation at this time. She describes this baby as being a beautiful infant with eyes of dark blue, soft as those of a gazelle, and hair of the real golden auburn, while her face had a glow of health and beauty which was very promising of long life. On the day after Henry's funeral her mother occupied herself in trimming Lucy's cap with bows of narrow black love-ribbon, and tying a black love-sash round her waist.

Mrs. Sherwood never returned to her old quarters at Berhampore after her boy's funeral, but went at night to the budgerow which had been prepared for their voyage to Cawnpore, and the next day their friend, Mr. Parson, fetched them to his house. He devoted himself to consoling her in her deep sorrow, and among other subjects he spoke much to her of Mr. Browne, of Henry Martyn, Mr. Corrie, and Charles Simeon, and the missionary efforts which were being planned in England for the conversion of India.

One day when Mrs. Sherwood felt very sad because little Lucy had no playmate, her husband was so much affected by her sorrow that he made a proposal which rejoiced her greatly. 'Would you like to adopt a little orphan from the barracks,' he said, 'some little motherless child who might be a companion to our Lucy?' and, seeing her so much pleased at the suggestion, he immediately caused enquiries to be made for an orphan child in the barracks.

While they were still staying as the guests of Mr. Parson, he was summoned to the hospital to visit a poor woman to whom the long voyage from England had proved most trying, and who lay in a dying condition. He was deeply affected when he returned, for the dying woman, Mrs. Childe, had had no time to make any friends in the regiment except with the few women who had come out in the same vessel, and who were also suffering from over-fatigue as she was, and thus she was quite alone save for a pale little child, not yet three years old, who sat quietly on the pillow beside her, unconscious of her threatened loss.

The bustle and hurry of departure, joined with an illness of little Lucy, put all thought of this little orphan from Mrs. Sherwood's mind at the time, but when the company was settled at Cawnpore, and the school had reassembled, Captain Sherwood's kind offer returned to his wife's memory, and she employed one of the soldier's wives to look out for a little girl for her. Singularly enough, little Annie Childe, whose father had died shortly after her mother, was brought for their adoption, and the faith which the dying woman had professed to Mr. Parson that her beloved little one would be well provided for—even better than she could do for herself—was justified.

They left Berhampore on the 9th of September for Cawnpore, and were deserted by almost all their servants at the very moment of embarkation, though Captain Sherwood had taken the precaution to ask each one whether he would accompany them or not. Some refused, but others professed their perfect willingness, so their master paid them all up the day before they sailed, those who had promised to go with them saying that they wanted their wages to buy provisions for the voyage. But when they got into their budgerow they were astonished to find that those who had undertaken to stay had decamped bag and baggage, while those who had intended to leave were in their places, and willing to continue to serve them. Their cook had taken his departure among the others, and consequently they had nothing to eat but what the budgerow itself contained for twenty-four hours.

CHAPTER XVII

HENRY MARTYN

The instant they anchored at Dinapore Captain Sherwood set out on foot to carry a letter of introduction from Mr. Parson to Henry Martyn, who eventually became one of their dearest friends.

The story of Henry Martyn is one of the interesting romances of the early Indian Missions. In spite of the cruelly sarcastic terms in which the Reverend Sydney Smith had, in the Edinburgh Review, stigmatized the missionary hopes of William Carey, the first Baptist Missionary to India, the example of 'the consecrated cobbler,' as Smith termed him, had, and has led to a large and most important following among the members of the church to which the reviewer himself belonged. Henry Martyn, helped by the influence of the Reverend Charles Simeon, of Cambridge, had sacrificed not only the natural worldly ambition of a promising career in England, he being a Senior Wrangler, but also the affection of the woman of his heart for the sake of devoting his whole energies to the work of Christianizing India.

Mrs. Sherwood describes him thus, for he received Captain Sherwood not as a stranger, but as a brother, and as the sun was already low, must needs walk back with him to the budgerow to see her. 'He was dressed

in white, and very pale; his hair, a light brown, was raised from his forehead, which was a singularly fine one. His features were not regular, but the expression was so luminous, so affectionate, so beaming with Divine charity, that no one could have looked at his features and thought of their shape or form—the out-beaming of his soul would absorb the attention of every observer. There was a very decided air, too, of the gentleman about Mr. Martyn, and a perfection of manners which, from his extreme attention to all minute civilities might seem almost inconsistent with the general bend of his thoughts to the most serious subjects.'

They stayed two days with him at Dinapore in his house, which, large as it was, was destitute of every comfort, although he had multitudes of people about him. Mrs. Sherwood had been troubled with a pain in her face, but there was not such a thing as a pillow to be found in the place, and she had to lay her head on a bolster stuffed as hard as a pin cushion. So the two nights of her visit were sleepless ones, but during the days she found much to enjoy. Her host had a rich deep voice, and a fine taste for vocal music, and his singing of hymns was a delight to his guests, while he himself was a most delightful companion, like an innocent happy child when he relaxed from his labours of translating and study.

As they were going down the river they met a boat bringing them bread and vegetables as a gift from Mr. Corrie, afterwards Bishop of Madras, who was then stationed as Chaplain at Chunar. He was a friend of their friend Mr. Parson, and this was his kindly way of welcoming them. Captain Sherwood went to call

on him as soon as they landed at Chunar, and brought him on board their pinnace, much to Mrs. Sherwood's pleasure. 'He was a tall man,' she writes, ... 'the expression of his countenance was as full of love as that of my fathers',—more I cannot say—with a simplicity wholly his own. He never departed from the most perfect rules of politeness; he never said a rude or unkind thing, and never seemed to have any consciousness of the rank of the person with whom he was conversing. He was equally courteous to all, and attentive to every individual who came within his observation. . . . He met us not as strangers, but as a dear brother and sister.' During the three hours he remained with them, he told them all his plans for teaching the people, and urged them, too, to make every exertion for the cause of Christianity.

Some days after leaving Dinapore they reached Benares, but the sacred city made a most unfavourable impression on them. In its wretched, dark, and narrow streets, they met perpetually with hogs, and sacred bulls having gilded horns; pariah dogs, and naked fakeers besmeared with mud and cow-dung; deformed men and women; beggars, lazars, lepers, brahmins, nautch girls, and devotees in furious fanatic excitement marching in procession, and shouting and howling fearfully in honour of their gods. They left Benares the morning after their arrival, starting before dawn, and being greatly surprised by the confused din of horns, cracked drums, and other nondescript instruments of discord with which the different places of worship in the city welcomed the break of day.

At Cawnpore Mrs. Sherwood was so very busy with the schools she started, and the care of the motherless children in the barracks, that it hardly seemed to her as if the taking of one or more orphans into her house were worthy of the notice of a few lines in her Indian Journal records, which she afterwards considered with regret to have been too much occupied by her own private feelings and thoughts, and too little with real events.

The regiment collected a large sum of money for all the little ones who had lost a parent, and by this means they were handsomely provided for. Some were taken into the care of the women in the barracks, who were glad to look after them for the money which was given with them, but as Captain Sherwood, as paymaster, had the charge of this charity, his wife had far more little creatures to see clothed and taken care of out of her own family than in it.

It was fortunate that she should be able to interest herself on behalf of these helpless orphans, for her own little Lucy was seized with an illness, and died after two days suffering. Her loss was a terrible grief to both her parents, for Captain Sherwood too was deeply devoted to his children, and in spite of all the kindly efforts of their friends to console them, they were a long time in recovering from their sense of bereavement. In after years Mrs. Sherwood acknowledged that she not only yielded to her grief, but cherished it also, for she wrote down all the particulars of her darling's last days on earth, and the circumstances of her death; and she dressed little Sally Pownal, a poor baby whom she had saved from being starved to death by its foster

mother, in Lucy's frocks, and again trimmed the children's caps with rosettes of black love-ribbon. Several weeks passed before she would go outside the garden, too, although she sometimes walked there with the children of the school.

Scarcely a month after the death of Lucy, Mrs. Parsons, the wife of a soldier, and a constant friend and helper to Mrs. Sherwood, died so unexpectedly that the first intimation the Sherwoods had of her death was through her husband coming to get flowers to lay over her grave. A few mornings afterwards he brought his little girl to his Captain's wife, who took her into her care for a short time and made her black clothes.

At this time there were many rumours of war and a consequent feeling of unrest, and every officer began to provide himself with camp furniture and camels, being in such constant expectation of an order to march. It was well that they did so, for soon afterwards there was a removal of three companies of the 53rd into the Bundelcund to take a strong fort west of Allahabad among the mountains.

During the whole of the cold season Mrs. Sherwood was in very good health, and taught daily in the regimental school in the morning, giving private lessons to her orphans in the afternoon. They had but few books for the children, so she wrote an outline of history, and a set of questions with verses attached to them; and also worked at a book named *The Infant Pilgrim*, of which she read the manuscript to her scholars as she progressed with it. When the hot winds began to blow they were obliged to discontinue the daily school, but

she had then more leisure for her books, her pen and ink, and her orphans.

A new book was to her like cold water to a thirsty soul, she writes, and she never forgot her delight at re-reading *Robinson Crusoe*, and reading an old copy of *Sir Charles Grandison* which Captain Sherwood bought for her.

She always sat in the hall of their home at Cawnpore during the hot weather, an apartment which had only borrowed lights from the rooms on the sides. Every outer door and window was closed, while all the inside doors and venetians were left open, most of the private rooms being shut in by *tatties* or screens of grass which was kept constantly wet by the water carriers. Little Annie Childe was her constant companion, sitting quietly beside her dressing her doll, or finding pretty verses in her Bible, and marking them with tiny slips of paper. Mrs. Sherwood had given her a little chair and table, and a green box to keep all her treasures, and she was a pleasing unobtrusive little creature, 'the child of all others to live with an ancient grandmother,' she writes.

In another part of the house Captain Sherwood sat making up his accounts, or engaged with his journal or his books. He did not like the confinement indoors as much as his wife did, and often contrived to get out to a neighbouring bungalow in his palanquin during the long mornings. Sergeant Clarke, the paymaster's assistant, sat with his books and accounts in a side room, and in another, little Sally Pownal played with her toys, while her attendant sat beside her chewing her *paun*, and enjoying a state of perfect apathy.

At one o'clock tiffin was always served, a hot dinner consisting of curry and a variety of vegetables; at four o'clock they took coffee, and then bathed and dressed; and at six, the hot wind generally falling, the *tatties* were removed, the windows and doors set open; and they either took the air in carriages, or sat on the verandah, but the evenings and nights brought little refreshment.

CHAPTER XVIII

Leave for Calcutta

To the joy of the Sherwoods the Reverend Henry Martyn was appointed in the place of their former chaplain, who had gone to the presidency, and one morning in May, 1809, when the desert winds were blowing like fire outside they suddenly heard the quick steps of many bearers outside their bungalow. Captain Sherwood ran out, and exclaimed 'Mr. Martyn!' and the next minute he led in their visitor, who immediately signalised his arrival by falling down in a fainting fit. He had travelled in a palanquin from Dinapore, journeying by night for the first part of the way, but between Allahabad and Cawnpore, a distance of a hundred and thirty miles, there was no resting place, and he had been compelled to go on for two days and two nights exposed to the raging heat of the wind. He was quite exhausted, and under the influence of fever, so, as the hall was the coolest place in the house, a couch was set there for him, where he lay very ill for a day or two.

As soon as he felt a little better he grew very cheerful and happy to have them all about him, lying on the couch with many books near to his hand; a Hebrew Bible, and a Greek Testament among the number. Very soon he began to talk to his hostess

of his plans. He was studying the Hebrew characters, having an idea that these characters contain the elements of all things; although Mrs. Sherwood had reason to suppose that he could not make them all out to his satisfaction, and whenever anything occurred to him, he must needs make it known to her.

He was also much engaged with another subject. He believed that if the Hindoos could be persuaded that all nations are made up of one blood to dwell upon the face of the earth, and if they could be shown how each nation is connected by its descent from the sons and grandsons of Noah with other nations existing upon the globe, that it would be a means of breaking down, or, at least, of loosening that wall of separation which they have set up between themselves and all other people. With this idea in view he was endeavouring to trace the various leading families of the earth to their great progenitors, and Mrs. Sherwood was so much pleased with what he said on this subject, that she immediately wrote down his words, and founded on it a system of historical instruction which she afterwards taught the children.

When he lost the worst symptoms of his illness he used to sing a great deal. He had a very fine voice and ear, and could sing many chants, and a great variety of hymns and psalms, several of which he taught his hostess. Little Annie Childe's sweet qualities were discovered by him in a very few days, and he encouraged her to draw her chair and table, and green box, near his couch, and consult him about the adoption of more passages of Scripture into the number of her favourites.

The salary of a chaplain was large, and as Mr. Martyn had not drawn his for a long time, he had some hundreds to draw. He was to receive it from the Collector at Cawnpore, so he sent a note for the amount by a *Cooley*, a porter of low caste, and a very poor man, without the knowledge of his host or hostess. The time passed and his messenger did not return, and at evening he said in a low tone of voice 'The Cooley does not come with my money. I was only thinking this morning how rich I should be, and now I shall not wonder in the least if he has not run off, and taken my treasure with him.'

'What?' they exclaimed, 'surely you have not sent a common Cooley for your pay?'

'I have,' he replied. They never expected that it would arrive safely, for it would be paid in silver, and be given to the man in cotton bags, but soon afterwards the Cooley brought it, and almost immediately Mr. Martyn went out, and being persuaded by one of his native friends, bought, to all appearance, one of the most undesirable houses that he could have chosen.

The approach to it, called the compound, was along a stiff funereal avenue of palm trees and aloes, at the end of which were two bungalows connected by a long passage, lowly built, and with small rooms. The garden was prettily laid out with flowering shrubs and tall trees; with a wide space in the middle on which was placed a raised platform called a cherbuter. A large number of huts formed one boundary of the compound, but they were concealed by the shrubs, Besides the usual complement of servants in the household there were a number of Pundits, Moonshees.

schoolmasters, and poor nominal Christians, who hung about here for the sake of the handful of rice which was their daily maintenance; and most strange was the murmur which at times proceeded from this ill-assorted multitude.

Mr. Martyn occupied the largest of these bungalows; the other he had given up to the wife of his attendant Sabat. This man claimed to be born of one of the noblest of Arab tribes, that of Koreish, and also asserted that he was a direct descendant of Mahomet.

On a burning evening in mid-June Mrs. Sherwood accompanied her husband to pay a visit for the first time to Mr. Martyn's bungalow. They were conducted to the raised platform in the garden, where the company were already assembled, Mrs. Sherwood being the only lady present. The description given of the party is interesting. For Sabat's face she recommends her readers to study any old sign of the Saracen's Head with large white teeth, fierce black moustachios, and bronzed complexion. He was a large and powerful man, and generally wore a skull cap of rich embroidered silk with circular flaps hanging over the ears. His dress was a jacket of silk with long sleeves, fastened by a girdle round his loins from which hung a jewelled dirk. He wore loose trousers and embroidered shoes turned up at the toes; in cold weather he threw on a wrapper lined with fur; and when it was warm, this was exchanged for one of silk. His ornaments were ear-rings and a gold chain. He could only speak Persian, Arabic, and a little bad Hindostanee, but he uttered his words in a voice like rolling thunder.

Besides the Sherwoods and Mr. Martyn no one else present could speak English.

The second of the guests in point of self-importance was the Padre Julius Cæsar, an Italian monk of the order of the Jesuits. He was a handsome young man, dressed in complete monastic costume, with his skull cap, flowing robes, and cord girdle, but his dress was of the finest purple satin, his girdle of twisted silk, and his rosary composed of precious stones, while his air and manner were extremely elegant. He spoke French fluently, and there Captain Sherwood was at home with him, but his conversation with Mr. Martyn was carried on partly in Latin, and part in Italian.

A third guest was a learned native of India in his full and handsome Hindostanee costume; and a fourth a little thin, copper-coloured, half-caste Bengalee gentleman, in white nankeen, who spoke only Bengalee. Captain Sherwood wore his scarlet and gold uniform; their host his clerical black silk coat, but unfortunately the lady of the party forbids us the pleasure of admiring her taste in dress by keeping silence as to her own garments on this occasion.

Loud utterance was considered a mark of respect in the East, and everyone shouted at the top of his voice as if he had lost his fellows in a wood. No less than seven languages were in constant request, and Mrs. Sherwood never listened to such a noisy perplexing babel of English, French, Italian, Arabic, Persian, Hindostanee, Bengalee, and Sanskrit. Mr. Martyn had heard Mrs. Sherwood say that she liked a sort of little mutton patty which the natives made particularly well, so, without asking if there were any mutton in the house, he called a servant, and ordered that these little patties should be added to the supper. Consequently they sat waiting on the platform

until it was quite dark, and all were wearied by the confusion of tongues.

On the 10th of August in this year, 1809, another little daughter was born to the Sherwood's. A few days after the infant's birth, mother and child being left alone for the time being, and the mosquito curtains removed for the sake of coolness, an enormous bat, as large as an owl, flew in towards dusk, and sat on the bar at the foot of the bed, with its round eyes fixed on the occupants. For some time Mrs. Sherwood could not make anyone hear, and she was obliged to lie still in terror until someone came to drive her strange visitant away.

They had asked Mr. Martyn to come to baptise the child, who was to be named Lucy Elizabeth, leaving the choice of the day to him; and he came on the 2nd of September in the cool of the evening, and conducted the service in the long verandah. Whilst the service was going on it suddenly occurred to Mrs. Sherwood that in that very spot in the verandah that very day exactly a twelve months ago, her first little Lucy had been laid upon the mattress from which she was lifted a corpse at midnight; and her heart rose into her throat, and she had great difficulty in preserving her composure.

Their doctors had given their opinion that none of Mrs. Sherwood's children born in India would live, so it was arranged that she should sail for England with her latest born treasure. Therefore they sold their bungalow and hired a large sixteen-oared budgerow, for their journey to Calcutta was to be made by water; and made the preparations for the separation which both husband and wife dreaded. On the Sunday before they left their home at Cawnpore all the children of the regiment came

for divine service as usual; and on the Monday they left the bungalow and went to the boat, in which they stayed for a week before their departure, sleeping there at night but spending the days with Mr. Martyn, who had placed a suite of rooms at their disposal. In the mornings all used to set out together from the river to the house while the dew was still lying upon the grass, for it was the beginning of the cold season, and the air was flower scented. When they reached the bungalow the children and the servants went to the quarters allotted to them, while Mrs. Sherwood went into the hall to breakfast. They sang a hymn, and Mr. Martyn read and prayed before the meal, which was a very sociable one with always one or more strangers, gentlemen, present, with whom the various plans for advancing the missionary cause were discussed.

Mr. Martyn had first at Dinapore, and now at Cawnpore established one or two schools for native children of the lower caste. His plan was to hire a native schoolmaster, generally a Mussulman, to find a place for teaching in, and to pay him an anna a head for each boy he could induce to attend school. His first school at Cawnpore was in a low shed which was on the side of the cavalry lines. The master sat at one end like a tailor, crosslegged on the dusty floor, and the scholars squatted in front of him, a pack of little urchins with no clothes on but a skull cap and a piece of cloth round their loins. They had wooden imitations of slates in their hands on which they wrote their lessons in chalk before reciting them in a loud voice, which grew shriller on the approach of any European or native of high caste. Cawnpore is one of the dustiest places in the world, and as these children were always well-greased either with cocoanut oil or rancid mustard

oil, whenever there was the slightest breath of air they looked as if they had been powdered all over with brown powder.

Sabat often made one of their company at Mr. Martyn's table. At that time he was, according to his own account, married to his seventh wife Amina, a pretty young woman who lived in the smaller bungalow. Mrs. Sherwood paid her one formal visit, and found her seated on the ground encircled by cushions within gauze mosquito nets. In the day-time these curtains were twisted and knotted above her head, and towards night they were let down around her, and she slept where she had sat all day. She had one or two women in constant attendance although her husband was in a subordinate position. She lived on miserable terms with him, and hated him most cordially, and, as he was very anxious to convert her to Christianity, closed the controversy one day by asking him 'where Christians went after death?'

'To Heaven, and to their Saviour,' Sabat replied.

'And where do Mahommedans go?'

'To hell and the devil,' was his answer.

'And you will go to Heaven?' she asked.

'Certainly,' he assured her.

'Then,' said Amina, 'I will continue in my own faith because I should prefer hell and the devil without you, to Heaven itself in your presence.'

This story Sabat himself told Mr, Martyn as a proof of the hardened spirit of his wife.

They left Cawnpore in October, and had the painful sight of an old man's smothering with holy mud from the river on the second day of their journey. He was not dead, but his relations had given him up, and the dying

man had no choice but to submit to his fate and allow himself to be carried in his bedstead to the shore where his bodily sufferings were soon ended by stuffing his mouth, nose, and ears with the mud. Then his corpse was left on the bedstead to be dragged thence by jackals and birds of prey.

The two orphans, Sally Pownal and Annie Childe, were to be left in the meantime with the Reverend Mr. Corrie, who was at present living at Chunar with his sister. After a very happy day spent in company with them Mrs. Sherwood bade them farewell, having left two European dolls which she had dressed, to be given to the little girls in the morning on their awaking. When they reached Benares they found that owing to a religious quarrel between the Hindoos and Mahommedans, the place was in a very unsettled condition. In anger at the gross abuse showered upon them, the Mahommedans killed a sacred cow, and sprinkled its blood on a Hindoo place of worship, while by the way of reprisal, the Hindoos killed pigs in all the mosques in order to pollute them; and the Sepoys had to be called out in order to prevent the mob from demolishing the noble mosque built by Aurungzebe. They reached Calcutta on the 28th of November, and found four ships so nearly ready to sail for England that the captains had gone on board. While they were waiting in indecision as to which to choose, the sight of the sea and the shipping had such a terrifying effect on Mrs. Wiley, the white nurse, who at her own request, they had engaged to accompany Mrs. Sherwood and the baby, that she suddenly declared she would not go with them. This disappointment had the effect of determining Mrs. Sherwood to consult other doctors as to

the possibility of keeping the child alive and in good health in India, before finally deciding to leave, and to her great delight two eminent physicians agreed that for some years at least, it was the best plan they could pursue.

After hearing this encouraging advice they were indeed happy, but so violent had been Mrs. Sherwood's agitation that her head began to ache very acutely, and in a few days her hair began to drop off in large quantities.

In an incredibly short time a pinnace was bought in place of the budgerow, which was both old and inconvenient, and having laid in provisions, they dropped down the river and anchored for two days on a quiet shore out of the reach of the houses. It is pleasant to read her comments on this period of restfulness.

'Let not anyone assert that there is not such a thing as happiness in this world. It would be impossible to give an idea of our peace, our joy, our delight during the two days we passed on that solitary shore, we who had so long anticipated a fearful separation. I remember even now our walks upon that quiet beach, our baby being carried by a black nurse at our side, our little fair and smiling Lucy.

CHAPTER XIX

AT CAWNPORE AGAIN

While the pinnace was anchored down the river, Captain Sherwood made the acquaintance of the Reverend Mr. Thomason, a friend of Henry Martyn's, and he insisted that they should stay a few days with him at Garden Reach. They were the more willing to do this because of the amiable disposition of Mrs. Thomason, who interested herself in kindly actions to all classes of humanity, and as Mrs. Sherwood's great consideration at the time was the neglected condition of white orphan children in India the subject formed a frequent topic of conversation between her host and hostess.

To Mrs. Thomason she was able to speak most unreservedly on the matter. When they were together on the pinnace that lady happening to see a copy of *Susan Grey* among their books, exclaimed with great delight how much she had liked it when in England, and as she asked if they knew who had written it, Mrs. Sherwood's confession of authorship seemed a bond of union between them.

During their stay at Garden Reach, Captain Sherwood received from the Botanic Garden a gift of four pots of strawberries to take up country with him. Before that time strawberries were unknown in the Indian provinces

A fortnight after they had left Calcutta, a budgerow containing an European family from the upper country approached them with little Sally Pownal on board. She had been adopted by them, but was very restless and pined after Mrs. Sherwood, so it was thought advisable to return her to her care. But at Chunar, where they proposed to reclaim little Annie Childe they found that Mr. and Miss Corrie had grown so deeply attached to her that they left her with her later protectors.

At Cawnpore their old friends gathered round, congratulating them on their return, and sincerely glad to see them again. Mrs. Sherwood's pupils and their parents were among the first to welcome them, for there had been no school in the regiment since they left and no hope of one until their return.

Last-named but not least beloved was Henry Martyn who came the very first evening to sup with them and to tell them how full of joy he was at their return. He looked very ill, and often complained of what he called a fire burning in his breast. He was with them almost continually during the first month of their return, April, 1810, and they had his company in a most tremendous touffan when the wind roared, and howled, and whistled as if bearing terrible voices on its wings, and excited them to a curious conversation on the subject. 'It was often in his mind,' Mr. Martyn remarked, 'that the Prince of the Power of the Air was permitted to inflict not only all storms and tempests, but all diseases and suffering in the flesh,' and he cited passages from the book of Job, and other parts of scripture to prove his opinion.

Despite his feeling of illness he allowed himself no remission in his work. One of his services at this cold

season was collecting together and preaching to all the Jogees and Fakeers he could gather by the gift of a *pice* to each.

'Every Sunday evening the gates of his compound were opened, and everyone admitted who chose to come to hear him address the people from the raised platform in his garden. Sometimes he had an audience of five hundred, and a more repulsive looking congregation would be difficult to imagine. It included the bloated and the wizened, the tall and short, athletic and feeble; some clothed in abominable rags; some nearly without clothes; some plastered with mud and cow dung; others with matted, uncombed locks streaming down to their heels; others with heads bald and scabby; every countenance being hard and fixed, as it were, by the continual indulgence of bad passions. But these, and such as these formed only the general mass of the people, for there were among them even more distinguished monsters.'

When Mr. Martyn collected these people he was closely watched by the English authorities, and had he attempted to proselytize any, or had he excited them to make any tumult, he would certainly have incurred a reproof, and been forbidden to gather them together again. So he was obliged to be very careful what he said, and chiefly confined his discussions to the moral law. He went over the ten commandments with them, but though he used great caution, he was often interrupted by groans, hissings, cursings, blasphemies, and threatenings, and the scene altogether was fearful.

We learn that after Mr. Martyn had left Cawnpore, a friend of Mrs. Sherwood's, Mrs. Hawkins by name, incited her to gather these people together and carry on the mis-

sionary work. Scarcely, however, were they seated when not only the Jogees, Fakeers, and rogues of that description which the neighbourhood afforded, but also the King of the Beggars himself wearing his peculiar badge, approached with such strong indications of defiance and insult, that Mrs. Hawkins rushed in terror into a small house near by, and left Mrs. Sherwood to appease the angry mob. Trembling with fright, for they were already groaning and hissing, she dealt out the small coins Mrs. Hawkins had brought, and the men went out of the compound in small parties but not without cursing the ladies liberally, for they were under the impression that they were trying to bribe them to change their religion, and never again did the two ladies dare to renew their attempts to convert the Fakeers. All Mrs. Hawkins's suggestions were not so unfortunate. She advised her friend to do literary work, which was more in keeping than collecting beggars for public oral teaching could have been, and the result was *The Ayah and the Lady* a story dealing with native life, many of the tales within it being founded on fact. This was translated into Hindostanee under Mrs. Hawkins's supervision, and so was *Little Henry and his Bearer*.

Mr. Martyn's health was a subject of grave apprehension to his friends at this time, for he had suffered with inflammation in the chest the autumn of the preceding year, and Mr. Corrie, his friend, made an application to the authorities to be permitted to remain at Cawnpore in order to be near him when he arrived there in the Spring on his way to Agra.

The little party of friends spent some hours every morning during the early part of September, 1810, in

taking short voyages on the river, as they had hired a pinnace and furnished it with a sofa and a few chairs and tables. The children and their attendants went with them. Mr. Martyn sent a quantity of books, and used to take possession of the sofa with all his books about him, for he was continuing his study of Hebrew, and had large lexicons for reference. Little Lucy Sherwood who was just able to walk by herself used always to make her way to him when it was possible, stepping noiselessly with shoeless feet towards his couch, and carrying a little stool in her hand by means of which she mounted to it and then seating herself on a big dictionary. He would never let her be disturbed, although he required the book every minute. Tiring of this seat she would move on to his knee, and take his book from him, pretending to read, but he would not have her removed, for he said she had taken up her position with him, and was on no account to be sent from him. In the meantime her mother was writing *The Indian Pilgrim* under the eyes of Mr. Corrie, being much assisted by some papers of Mr. Martyn's.

She often went out driving with Mr. Martyn in his gig, knowing that she went at the peril of her life, for he never looked where he was going, but went dashing through thick and thin, being always occupied in reading Hindostanee, or discussing some text of scripture. She writes that she certainly never expected to survive one lesson on the pronunciation of one of the Persian letters which he gave her in his gig in the midst of the plain of Cawnpore.

He had long been intending to leave Cawnpore, purposing to return to England by way of Persia, and his departure was the first breach in their happy little circle.

He was most anxious to finish the translation of the New Testament into Persian before he died, for he felt that he could not live much longer, and the pressure of the climate weighed heavily upon him, but his attendant, Sabat, would often contend for a whole morning about the meaning of an unimportant word so that his master had to order his palanquin and go to Captain Sherwood's in order to withdraw from the sound of the Arab's voice.

On the Sunday before he left Cawnpore he had the satisfaction of seeing the English Church opened, and the bell sounded for the first time. The church was crowded and the regimental band led the singing and chanting. Sergeant Clarke, Captain Sherwood's assistant, had been appointed clerk, and sat under the desk in due form in his red coat, and went through his duty correctly. The Reverend Daniel Corrie read prayers, and Henry Martyn preached. From his first arrival at the station Mr. Martyn had been working to obtain a place of public worship, and he was permitted to see the building open and to address the congregation once before he must depart. He was filled with hope and joy, for he thought he saw the dawn of better things in Cawnpore, and most eloquent, earnest, and affectionate was his sermon.

The usual party accompanied him back to his bungalow, where he sank, nearly fainting, on a sofa in the hall. When he was a little better he called them about him to sing, and they sang the hymn:

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home!

They dined early, and when the sun was going down he gave his last address to the Fakeers, although he nearly fainted again after this effort. On the Monday he went to his boat which lay at the Ghaut nearest the bungalow, but they saw him again in the evening, and once again they supped together, and united in one last hymn. They were very sad, for they could not expect to see his face again, or to hear his voice more, or to be again instructed or elevated by his conversation.

His object in going through Persia was the completion of his translation of the New Testament into Persian. He had, however, formed a pleasant anticipation of his visit to that country, all his ideas of it being taken from the descriptions given by the poets, and he often spoke of it as a land of nightingales and roses, of fresh flowing streams and sparkling fountains, and of breezes laden with perfume. These imaginations pleased and soothed him, besides checking him of some fears.

He died of fever at Tokat, in Asia Minor, on the 16th of October, 1812, at the age of thirty-one.

CHAPTER XX

Work at Meerut

After Mr. Martyn's departure Miss Corrie and little Annie Childe, their adopted orphan, removed to his bungalow, where her brother was already living, and where the intercourse between them and the Sherwoods was almost as close as if they were all living in the same house, the two families helping each other in their plans of working. They brought the children from the barracks after the hot season and re-opened the schools, having more scholars than they ever had before. They also placed a soldier and his wife in a small house in the Church compound, and, having made a little collection among the officers, they settled several motherless girls there under this woman's care. Mrs. Sherwood used to go daily after tiffin to see these children, causing what remained of pie, pudding, or fruit, from that meal to be carried on a tray for them.

At this time Captain Sherwood occupied his leisure by arranging classes for the use of any young soldiers who wished to improve themselves in reading and writing.

Among the children who came into school were several half-castes, the offspring of European officers and native women. In several instances they appeared without notice before the bungalow in their bullock

coaches, accompanied by an old Ayah, and only saying in broken English 'they had come to learn.' Two sisters about thirteen or fourteen years of age particularly attracted Mrs. Sherwood's attention among these; tall, slender, dark, delicate looking girls wearing white muslin gowns and red coloured shoes, and having for ornaments gold ear-rings and cornelian necklaces. Their glossy black hair was neatly braided and partly knotted on the top of their heads, and they had fine teeth and eyes. They did not know a single letter and were so uninstructed that they could do nothing but mark on fine canvas.

At this time Mr. Corrie was busy getting Mrs. Sherwood's book *The Indian Pilgrim* translated into Hindostanee for the benefit of the Hindoos. He was very successful in getting a chapter of the work translated by a Mussulman, whom he was employing as translator, but as one of the chapters treats of the Mahommedan religion, Captain Sherwood advised him to keep that back until all the rest was finished. Mr. Corrie, however, thought his translator might be benefited by reading this portion, and gave it to him, with the effect that he took offence, and the work was at an end.

On the occasion of the birth of Mrs. Sherwood's next baby, a little girl, July 20th, 1811, one of the young officers in the regiment, hearing much of the child's beauty, came to see her with some of his companions, and wrote to her mother asking to be allowed to be the baby's godfather, on his return home, giving as his reason for the request that the responsibility might do him good, and constrain him to lead a better life than he had done hitherto. An amusing scene

occurred at her christening, when Mr. Corrie took her in his arms and asked what was to be her name? On being told 'Martha,' after her grandmother Butt, he laid her down, and said firmly 'Then I don't christen her.' 'What will you please to have her called?' they asked. He answered 'Emily.' 'Then Emily it shall be,' they replied, and in accordance with his choice Emily was the child's name.

In the December following, five companies of the 53rd regiment were ordered to take the field against some forts to the westward of Bundelcund, the commanding officer, Colonel Mawby, and his staff accompanying them. Although few soldiers took part in this engagement Captain Sherwood described the scene as being one of peculiar horror. The guns were actually forced up a road nearly perpendicular, and for three days the fort was attacked in vain, and then it was determined that it should be stormed next morning, and by sunrise there was a heavy fire of artillery. In a little while the wounded men were brought into camp, saying the fort (that of Callinger), neither could, nor would be taken, and the officers, too, agreed that the rock was invulnerable for the lowest and least difficult place was ten feet of perpendicular height. This was, however, overcome in the end by ladders, after ascending which there was a wall thirty feet in height to surmount; which the soldiers achieved by clinging to the stones of the old wall. While hanging on to them they were knocked down by large stones rolled from above, or fired upon by matchlock men who were themselves in a position of perfect security. Twelve of the officers who led the attack were carried back

before eight o'clock, two being dead and the rest wounded, while a hundred and twenty-two men were carried back, thirteen being left dead. The body of Major Frazer was left in the breach, and not recovered for five days. But the enemy was so much terrified that he sent to surrender, and a deputation of hostages, elephants, palanquins, and their other belongings, was brought into camp accompanied by many Indian chiefs. After this, on the 14th of February, Colonel Mawby gave Captain Sherwood leave to return to Cawnpore, and he reached home after a most fatiguing journey on the 18th of February, 1812.

Time had not passed uneventfully in his absence. The quietude of one Sunday morning was disturbed by the shock of an earthquake, which fortunately did no damage beyond frightening the inhabitants of the bungalow.

The adoption of an orphan or two seemed to have grown a commonplace with these kindly people, but the child taken under their protection this same month was singularly unfortunate. Its mother had died the evening before, and the father gave orders that the coffin should be made large enough to enclose the baby beside his dead wife. In consequence of his callous cruelty several of the women of the regiment brought the baby wrapped up in an apron to Mrs. Sherwood, and Mr. Corrie baptized it by the name of Margaret.

Being ordered to Agra, Mr. Corrie left his Hindostanee schools, several curious native Christian *protégées*, and four native Christian boys for whom he provided altogether, in the care of Mrs. Sherwood. The native schoolmaster was ordered to parade his boys every day

before her bungalow, and she was to see to their writing, to hear their recitals, and to mark their tasks. When this work first devolved on her she could not follow the words in the book, and did not know where the pupil stopped, so she very ingeniously handed her pencil to each boy in turn to mark the place himself where he left off, and so gained time to grow expert without being found out. She looked after the clothes of the four Christian boys, and saw that twice a week they made themselves respectable to attend Divine service. On all other days their external appearance spoke of nothing but oil and dust.

Besides these duties which fell upon his wife, when he returned, Captain Sherwood took the Hindostanee service for Christian natives, and conducted it twice a week. This service had been begun by Henry Martyn and was carried on by Mr. Corrie after his departure. The congregation met in the church on Sundays and Wednesdays, and consisted of all kinds of odd people, chiefly hangers-on of the 53rd regiment.

Many regimental changes took place in 1812, and to Mrs. Sherwood's great regret they were ordered to Meerut. Cawnpore had very dear associations for her, since her first little Lucy was buried there; her second Lucy, and Emily were born there; and there she had become acquainted with, and deeply attached to her friends Henry Martyn, and Mr. and Miss Corrie.

On the journey from Cawnpore to Meerut they met with an unpleasant adventure. Near Shahjehanpoor they arranged themselves for the night in their tents as usual, but they had scarcely fallen asleep before they were awakened by the howling of wolves and

wild dogs, and the dogs several times actually made their way in to them. They were terrified lest these savage beasts should attempt to take away one of the babies, and Mrs. Sherwood got up and placed Emily and her nurse in the palanquin within the tent, closing the doors; and took little Lucy in her own arms. It was a fearful situation and she dare not go to sleep until it was day light, and then she had only closed her eyes when she was roused by the men taking down the tent according to orders.

Their house at Meerut stood in a beautiful large garden well stocked with bambool-parkinsonia, pomegranate, orange, and citron trees, and provided with a long grape trellis, and it only took a few hours for them to be settled in perfect comfort.

About this time an order came from the Duke of York to appoint a schoolmaster to teach the children of the regiment, and a very suitable man being chosen the greater burden of the school was lifted from Mrs. Sherwood's shoulders.

They tried to establish a native school in Meerut, but at first found themselves laughed at by the natives in the bazaars when they inquired for children to teach. At last a man came to the door to sell thread, and, seeing one of the children with a Hindostanee book in her hand, he said he could read himself, and promised to find them a schoolmaster, sending them an old gray bearded pedagogue with thirteen boys the next day. They agreed to pay him four rupees a month, and two annas a head for each boy he could collect, and at the end of the month they had nineteen boys on their books, few of whom could tell a letter when they came.

These were all of low grade, and were smeared with oil, and smelled of garlick, but, as before at Cawnpore, they were paraded twice a day before the house. In the morning Mrs. Sherwood examined them as to what had been done the day before, and in the afternoon they passed along the verandah, and stood opposite her dressing-room window, all repeating the ten commandments in Hindustanee, after which their master shook his cane at them as a signal for their return to the school, which was held in a room in the stable.

The Sherwood's house was the only depository of the Scriptures in that part of India at that time, and on receiving a present of rose-water as an invitation to visit the Begum Somru, Mrs. Sherwood directed that a copy of the Gospels in Persian which she had by her should be handsomely bound, and richly decorated with gold by the Meerut workmen as a present for her Highness. This gift was most graciously accepted, and it is to be hoped it had some softening influence on this autocrat, who ruled with absolute power in her small territory, torturing the slaves who offended her with thumbscrews, and on one occasion ordering two of her women to be buried alive, and causing her carpet to be spread over their grave so that she might dine upon the place.

It was whilst they were at Meerut that Chuny Laul, the Copra Walla, brought a party of Nautch girls to their gates and asked if they would like to see a Nautch. Mrs. Sherwood was glad of the opportunity, and had the party ushered into the largest room of the bungalow, collecting every child and servant in the compound to see the sight, which she confesses she

found both astonishing and fascinating, being carried in fancy by it to the golden halls of ancient kings. The nights at this time of the year were so very hot that she often got up and sat partially dressed by the open window, listening to the songs of these unhappy dancing girls accompanied by the music of the cithara, and as she listened she grew very sad with the reflection of the mischievous influence these poor women were exerting over the younger English officers and soldiers, and thought of writing an illustrative story, a purpose she afterwards carried into effect in her story of *George Desmond*, the relation of the poisoning of Emily Desmond by a native woman being taken from a particular case brought under her own notice.

In February of this year, 1813, they received the sad intelligence of the death of Henry Martyn, and Mrs. Sherwood resolved that if she ever had a son he should bear the name of this dear friend of hers. On the first morning of the following July her son was born, and they christened him Henry Martyn, Mr. Corrie standing as the boy's godfather, for he was at Meerut at the time. When the name was given, tears were in the eyes of all present.

CHAPTER XXI

The Goorkha War

On the 3rd of October, 1813, the order came for the regiment to march against the Goorkhas. All the effective men were to leave the station, but the women and children were to remain at Meerut without protection, so the Begum-Somru was asked for aid. She sent a guard for each family; Mrs. Sherwood being appointed six men, who were to live in her compound, and defend her during the night, but these men looked so savage and fierce themselves that she had no real confidence in them.

The Sunday before the march was a most affecting day to all, and after the usual religious service Captain Sherwood begged the men, who were, with few exceptions regular attendants, to give continual attendance to their religious duties when in camp, giving them each a little book, and promising the use of his tent for their evening meetings. Two years before twelve of these men had presented Mrs. Sherwood with a copy of Rippon's Hymn book with their names written on the first page over a verse of a hymn imploring spiritual benefit for her and for themselves. Though they had gone through many campaigns before, several of them were persuaded they should never return from this one, and brought their watches, tea-spoons, and other

valuables, begging her to take care of them and to forward them to their friends at home in the event of their death.

The march was towards the Himalayas, and was directed against the Goorkhas, one of the mountain tribes which so often made incursions on the people of the plains, but it was desired to keep the proposed movements of the troops as secret as possible in order that the enemy might not be prepared. This secrecy increased the alarm of the soldier's wives, for when they parted from their husbands they did not know from whence they might next hear of them.

As one of the earlier attempts at Indian frontier making on the part of the English the record has a peculiar interest. On one occasion orders were given at twelve o'clock at noon for an evening march, and although it was directed that no one should start before night, the camp followers were at once set in motion, and anxious to clear the head of the pass before the column reached it, and Captain Sherwood found himself obliged, as it were, to act with the others despite orders. So leaving his tent to take its chance, he tacitly authorized its striking, packing, and moving, and set off himself to see what was to be seen, being soon joined by two of his friends; his own commanding officer, Colonel Mawby, being in advance. The narrowness of the pass caused great confusion, for the camels were forced together in a mass, and the three friends were obliged to dismount and lead their horses now stepping over a fallen camel, and now creeping under a standing one, while discordant sounds of thumping, swearing and shouting, were enough to deafen

them. The crest of the pass was scarcely nine feet wide and almost as steep as the roof of a house. Soon the *Sais* (a native groom) took charge of Captain Sherwood's horse, and he scrambled up the bank and stood on the highest point in company with his friends, giving orders and advice to which no one attended. One restive camel fell and blocked the road, and nothing could make him move till a cord was placed round him and he was turned on his back and drawn along like a sledge.

Being very tired the Captain rested under a tree, and lighted a fire of brushwood to prepare his dinner, and, being provided with a bottle of wine, was much pleased when his friends rejoined him. They watched the rising of the moon together, and two of them sang *Rise, Cynthia, rise,* to the annoyance of the third, 'who would rather have been at Ibbotson's Hotel,' Captain Sherwood writes.

The great heat of the day which had made their exertions more trying gave place to as great a coldness, and when the regiment joined them about ten o'clock, they were very glad to go forward. At midnight they reached the place where their guide had left Colonel Mawby, but though the marks of the encampment were visible in the moonlight, no man nor beast was to be seen. In the morning they learned that the army was about three miles off, encamped opposite a high hill on which the fort of Kalunga was built.

The fort had a very imposing appearance, and although it was small and newly built, its natural defences were so strong that Colonel Mawby was obliged to desist from his attack upon it until he could draw up

six-pound gallopers and form a battery. The firing began soon after daylight, and towards noon a native cavalry officer came galloping down exclaiming 'General Gillespie is killed, and the attack has failed!'

When the general fell, he had few except officers near him. He was shot through the heart, and the total loss to the English was nearly five hundred men, the officers being out of proportion in numbers. At half-past six next morning Captain Sherwood read the burial service over the officers and men who had been brought in, and permission was asked to bring the dead from the field.

At two o'clock on the 29th of October, the Goorkhas made a rush down the hill in the hope of forcing their way out, but they were driven back with great loss, and about an hour afterwards they made a second most desperate attempt where many were killed and some few escaped. Hearing that the fort was empty Captain Sherwood started for it before it was light, but he was advised to wait lest he should tread on the dead or dying. The fort was very small, and the whole enclosure was filled with bodies; in one place about ten feet long by six feet broad, seven corpses lay across each other. It was trenched about in every direction with trenches two feet in depth, and in these trenches the unhappy people had sought shelter.

There were eighty-six dead bodies lying in this small place, and the wounded were in a most wretched state, unable to move, and crying out for water, to which the officers were helping them as quickly as they could. Some of these poor creatures had lain there for three days with their limbs broken. One young

woman with a broken leg was lying partly covered by the dead bodies, and as she could not move, she held her mouth open for water most eagerly. They could not get near her, but at length they contrived to pour a stream of water over her. There was another poor woman, unhurt herself, but with a wounded baby at her breast. She was dreadfully distressed, but the child was taking its food and did not seem to mind. A soldierly looking Goorkha lay on a bed in the fort; he was wounded in the head, and unconsciously making figures in the bloody dust with his fingers. Two little girls, one about four years old, and the other about a year old, had lost both father and mother, and the elder screamed very much for fear lest she should be separated from her sister.

The scène was very distressing to Captain Sherwood; but, as he said, until a few days these had been a conquering, oppressing people, who had held this place, and kept the plains around in fearful subjection. He saw these prisoners some time afterwards, clean and in high spirits, particularly the young woman, who had got a wooden leg.

When he again visited the fort it was partly cleaned, and ninety-seven dead bodies had been burnt, but all around were traces of imperfect burials. The ground was very rocky, and it was difficult to dig deep in it, so that he could still count thirty bodies half buried, many of them having an arm or a leg above ground. All the sights he saw in the fort were not so sad, for one day he found a hill partridge there, enclosed in a wicker basket without a door, which he afterwards sent home to his wife. This kind of bird was called a *chuckoor*,

and was said to eat fire, and this particular one loved the warmth of the sun, and delighted to come out of the new cage they bought for it, and roll itself in the dust. When the Sherwood's were leaving India for England they gave this pet to Dr. William Carey, who had a beautiful aviary, where his birds lived in all the luxury of Indian Queens in the Baptist Missionary Establishment at Serhampore.

The women left at Meerut were very much troubled by the death of General Gillespie, for they heard of nothing but the killed and wounded, or of the enemy's horsemen collecting near them, and they were advised to pack up a few things and retreat within the city walls for safety, since Meerut had been fortified. They were also threatened with the Sikhs and other marauders, and felt themselves utterly helpless. The General's body had been sent to Meerut for interment, and he was buried with full military honours. Three of the soldiers who had left their valuables in Mrs. Sherwood's care had met their death at Kalunga; but although the taking of the fort had been such a terrible affair, those waiting at Meerut were somewhat easier when the true accounts were made known, for anxiety and rumour had worn them greatly.

But dismal news again reached them from the camp, for more of the 53rd had been killed in trying to stop the water of a fort near Nahum.

Captain Sherwood was very anxious respecting his wife, and the following paragraph, taken from a letter sent by his Colonel to Mrs. Mawby, relates how he asked for leave. *Buxi* it must be explained means paymaster in the Anglo-Indian vernacular. 'Mr. Buxi

came up the hill this morning at breakfast time, and I asked what he wished for?' He said, 'I wish for many things.' 'Well, what are they?' 'Why, sir, I wish I was off this hill.' 'And what more, Mr. Buxi?' 'I wish sir, that I could be allowed to go to Meerut to Mrs. Sherwood after mustering and paying the regiment on the 4th.' I left him, of course, in suspense, but on going away he said, 'Well, sir, may I write to the collector to lay bearers for me at Meerut?' so that I suppose he will be with his family about the end of this month.'

Captain Sherwood arrived at Meerut just at morning dawn about the 1st of February, 1815, very greatly to his family's delight in the midst of their alarms. He had grown tanned till he was as dark as a mulatto, and he, in common with the rest of the officers, had let his hair and moustache grow for protection against the cold mountain winds, so he made a marked contrast to his fair complexioned little children as they hung about him.

The little Sherwoods were all so delicately coloured that in one of their mother's most popular works, in representing her own children, she calls them *The Fairchild Family*. Nineteen days after his return another daughter, Sophia, was born.

On Easter Sunday the Begum Somru came with her camels and set up her tents in the plain behind the Sherwoods bungalow, and that of Mr. Parson, the chaplain to the regiment. She then sent her usual present of rose-water to some of the ladies as a hint that they were to pay her their compliments, and

accordingly several officer's wives went, and Mrs. Sherwood accompanying them with two of her daughters, and two of the orphans. They were ushered into the principal tent where her Highness was sitting huddled up among Cashmere shawls and cushions, her hookah set ready by one hand, and her paun box at the other, and very little of her to be seen except her remarkably plain face. A little boy of five or six years of age, named David Dyce, the son of her husband's daughter, was perched behind her on the cushions; dressed in a full Court suit coat, waistcoat, and shorts of crimson satin, with a cocked hat on his head, and a sword dangling by his side. On either hand was a row of female slaves dressed in dirty white cotton and standing with their backs to the wall of the tent.

After having exchanged bows and salaams in due form, and chairs being offered, the Begum spoke to the children Mrs. Sherwood had brought with her, all of whom answered very politely except little Emily who was silent, and the old woman seemed determined to make her speak. At first she began gently, but the child would not reply, so she said 'I suspect you have no tongue?' 'I have,' Emily answered. 'It is good for nothing then,' said the Bergum, 'I will have it cut out and given to the crows.' Emily grew red and stamped her foot, calling the old lady, 'A naughty wicked Bee-bee.' The Begum laughed and the slaves echoed her, but Mrs. Sherwood was glad to get the child safely away; Master David handing them out with the usual etiquette.

One Sunday morning when Captain Sherwood was away at Kalunga, a Mr. Leonard, who was to take the

service in the chapel at Meerut, failed to arrive in consequence of having suddenly fallen ill with fever. There was no one else in the neighbourhood to do duty, and, to the great enjoyment of the native servants, Mrs. Sherwood and the children were kept anxiously looking out from the verandah. 'It is very late, and Mr. Leonard is not to be seen,' they said. 'He is not coming. The congregation are waiting in the sun, shall they not be dismissed.'

'Open the chapel doors then, and let them in,' she answered. Again they came with glee, concealed by assumed perplexity, to beg her to dismiss the people, when suddenly she saw two well-dressed natives approaching, the principal of whom was decidedly of superior birth. After the first civilities had passed the strangers said that they had come expressly to see her, and that Mr. Chamberlayne had desired them to seek her out. Mr. Chamberlayne was a Baptist Minister who had been engaged by the Begum Somru as a tutor to her grandson, and these two visitants had been converted to Christianity by him. One, whose name was Permunund, was accustomed to help him in conducting his religious services, so he agreed to take duty in the little chapel, and as he had an uncommonly fine voice, and read very well, it was a happy relief from what Mrs. Sherwood feared would be a painful dilemma. Without hesitation she engaged him to remain in the family for a few months to take the service in the chapel, to overlook the native schoolmaster, and to instruct the children on terms that were mutually satisfactory, and he took great pains to do what he could to please her.

Captain Sherwood was soon recalled to the camp, which was still in the field before one of the forts. 'The Goorkhas,' he wrote, 'desert in dozens. The great number of women in the fort is the reason both of their distress and obstinacy. I pity the Goorkhas, and wish they would come to terms; yesterday one came in and said they were starving.' Again he writes, 'The poor Goorkhas are absolutely starving and begging for food, but we dare not give them any, for fear they will not capitulate as long as they can exist.' On the 18th of May, he wrote 'The Goorkha chief came into the camp and all appeared to be at peace, but the fort not being in the possession of the English, anxiety still prevailed.' On the 29th, however, he arrived at home.

About the 20th of June, to their great grief, they received orders for their immediate removal to Berhampore, and on Thursday, the 14th of July, 1815, they saw the beloved chapel at Meerut with the congregation in it for the last time.

CHAPTER XXII

Last Days

At Berhampore the regiment received orders to proceed immediately to Calcutta in order to embark for Madras, but as the Sherwoods had determined to return to England, and Captain Sherwood had obtained a year's leave, these orders affected them but little. Captain Sherwood gave up his paymastership on the 24th of September, 1815, and the iron safe in which the regimental money was kept was carried away to the acting paymaster's quarters. He had been very nearly twenty years with the 53rd regiment, and was so unwilling to have a parting scene that they left at four o'clock in the morning, and halted at some distance above the station.

At Calcutta Mrs. Sherwood was greatly pleased to meet her friend Miss Corrie, now Mrs. Sherer, and together they journeyed to Aldeen, fourteen miles up the river, and near the Baptist Missionary Establishment at Serhampore. One evening when they were returning from service they heard the noise of horns and drums, and tinkling cymbals, but as these were usual enough sounds, they did not think much of them until they saw smoke and flames rising above the trees beyond the domain, and several of the missionaries came rushing along towards the fire. 'A Suttee! a Suttee!'

they cried, 'we fear we are too late.' As the little ones understood their words they too began to run to try to stop the cruel sacrifice; but the fire continued to blaze, and the infernal music filled the air, and soon the missionaries returned with the children, who were crying bitterly, for the work of death was over before they could reach the place.

In Mrs. Sherwood's time an unfortunate system prevailed largely among the men in barracks, who were each allowed to take a native woman as a temporary wife whilst they were in India. There had been two orphanages provided near Calcutta for the orphaned children of these unions; one for the children of officers, and the other for the children of military men of lower grades. In them at one time all the regimental orphans found a refuge, and the half-castes largely predominating their influence was decidedly very pernicious for the small minority of white children. In one case, indeed, a little girl named Sarah Abbott, the only white child at the time in the orphanage, was literally hunted to death by the other children, they not being content merely to drive her from them at their play hours, but also tormenting her until her health gave way, and she died. Lady Moira, the wife of the then Governor General of India became greatly interested in the subject, and as Mr. Thomason was the chaplain to the government party, she desired him to collect all the information he could obtain on the state of motherless white girls in barracks from Mrs. Sherwood; and was confirmed by what she heard in her intention of establishing a third asylum in Calcutta for white orphans alone. Every lady in the presidency at once came forward to

patronise this charity, and Mrs. Sherwood had the pleasure of seeing the first house appointed for the Orphan Asylum, which was in the Circular Road, before she left for England.

But the coloured population took violent offence at what they took to be an invidious distinction, and showed their ill feeling in many ways, for they burned Mr. Thomason's effigy in one of the most public places, and sent him many very painful anonymous letters. One especially written in a delicate female hand, and signed *Indiana*, remonstrated most pathetically against the slur set upon herself and all in her condition as children of a mixed breed, saying that it was not their fault that it was so, and asking how it agreed with humane and Christian feeling to add mortification to their unhappy state. There was, however, already a home for girls of her description, the Upper Orphan School, so no injustice was done by the establishment of an orphanage for white children alone.

Several of the orphans of the 53rd regiment in whose welfare Mrs. Sherwood had interested herself so warmly were left in the new Home under the happiest auspices, and she writes that she felt more thankfulness than she could express for the kindness which provided for these helpless children. Annie Childe, who had been adopted by Mr. and Miss Corrie, remained in India, but Mary Parsons and Sallie Pownal accompanied Mrs. Sherwood to England.

They sailed in the *Robarts*, which was the first vessel from India to avail itself of the opening of the port of Liverpool to East Indiamen. One or two servants accompanied them to the ship, amongst whom

was little Sophia Sherwood's Indian bearer, Jevan, who had been most devoted to the child. He would see his little one as far as the black water, he said. The children wept most bitterly when they saw the Indian shores receding, and they all felt very sad.

The voyage was uneventful save for one terrible storm. They landed for a few hours at the Cape, and Mrs. Sherwood took all her little people on shore with her, so that they might say in after years 'that they had been in Africa,' and little Sophia might be said to have learned to walk there, writes her fond mother, since the little girl was only a year old, and had been two months at sea. By the time she was fifteen months old, this child had travelled fifteen thousand miles from the place of her birth.

When they reached Liverpool the whole town welcomed the East Indiaman. Had the *Robarts* brought a royal party it could scarcely have excited more rejoicing than it did through being the first vessel from India to enter the port. Bells were rung, and the landing place was crowded with thousands of spectators. The Sherwood's party happened to be the largest from the ship, for there were eight children with them, and they were followed wherever they went by hundreds of people. As each person was allowed to land one Indian shawl free of duty, all the little girls had been made the bearer of one, and they all wore white dresses and caps trimmed with lace, without a bonnet among the party. They could not understand for some time why they attracted so much attention, and the children trembled with fear, but they were received with kindly looks, and many expressions of welcome.

When they reached their inn, the *Talbot*, they were led to an upper sitting room, which was so strange a sight to the children that one said 'it was like a box lined with coloured paper.' The fresh rolls for breakfast also made them wonder and express so much joy that the hostess and maids who contrived to keep near them, were quite convulsed with merriment. They were amazed at the feather beds, and shrieked with delight when Mrs. Sherwood threw the baby on one, and she sank down laughing into it; and the sights seen from the windows, the shops, and the passengers were an infinite source of pleasure to them.

They landed on June 1st, 1816, and Mrs. Sherwood took three of her little girls the next day to church, it being Sunday, and confesses that she had been so long away from England that she had forgotten to provide them with that *sine quâ non* of English attire—a bonnet each—much to the surprise of some old ladies in Liverpool who talked for many years afterwards of the Indian family who looked so remarkable in their shawls and lace caps, and were so unconscious of their *outré* appearance. They were still followed by a concourse of people who looked favourably upon them as the first fruits of the port, and smiled at the fair-faced little children who had been born in a far-off land.

They left Liverpool next morning for Worcester, stopping at Trentham Parsonage to see the Reverend Thomas Butt, Mrs. Sherwood's cousin, and at Snedshill to visit her sister Lucy, now Mrs. Cameron, whose husband was pastor there. At Newport, where they waited for Mr. Cameron, a stranger came to Mrs. Sherwood as they were looking about the street, and

said, 'It is indeed a privilege, Madame, to see the authoress of *Henry and his Bearer*.'

He was a Mr. Houlston, the publisher of the book, to whom Lucy had sold the manuscript when it was sent to her in an Indian letter from Captain Sherwood, and knowing that Mrs. Sherwood was expected, the appearance of a lady without a bonnet had at once assured him of her identity. The book's success was great, and the authoress suddenly found herself within reach of high literary honour as a writer for children. Some time later she had a letter from Dr. Morrison, the missionary, from China, to tell her that he was translating *Henry and his Bearer* into Chinese, and that he had seen it also in the Cingalese language.

At Worcester they had the joy of re-union with Mrs. Butt, and their eldest child, Mary Henrietta, now almost a grown-up girl, so that her mother could scarcely realize the idea that the child before her was the baby she had left. The shyness, the strong affection, the curiosity, and yet the fear of their feelings made up something more than pleasure, something too much for human nature, Mrs. Sherwood writes, and she was unable to describe the intense interest of the meeting. Mrs. Butt was in a very delicate state of health, but very happy in making plans for settling in one home with her eldest daughter and her husband, and together they looked at many houses with this avowed intention.

They saw that the hand of death was upon her, but they never thought that she would not live to see another summer. Mrs. Sherwood felt that she could not leave her again, and therefore her husband determined to retire on half pay, since neither of them

could endure the thought of separation from each other.

But now, for the first time, Mrs. Sherwood writes, they found that their family was a numerous, and consequently an expensive one, with five children of their own, and two orphan girls, besides calls for *protégés* in India. For many a year, also, she had been waited on hand and foot, and the children had been accustomed to have servants and carriages at their disposal, and all the luxuries of the East. But still the desire to be together and not to part made comparative poverty appear preferable to luxury and separation.

Strange to say, although her literary gifts were already well known, neither Captain Sherwood nor she calculated upon receiving much money for her works, and Mrs. Sherwood determined to take pupils to educate with the six little girls already under her care. But before the second pupil was offered to her, Mrs. Butt's death put her in possession of her patrimony, and Captain Sherwood secured his half pay, so that their income became more than sufficient for their needs when their Indian savings, and the liberal sums obtained for her books were added to it. Mrs. Sherwood however, was so fond of the society of young people, and rejoiced so much in the number of cheerful faces about her, that Captain Sherwood never put a check upon her making their house an asylum for motherless girls in England any more than he had done in India.

They bought a house for themselves on the road between Worcester and Malvern, and shortly after they took up their abode there, Mrs. Sherwood's last child, a little boy named George after his grandfather Butt,

was born, but unfortunately, he did not live many months. Soon after his death Captain Sherwood took his wife for a change of scene to France, where they visited St. Vallery, and went to the Abbey where Henry Sherwood had spent some of his youthful years. His father had lost the title deeds during the revolutionary troubles, so that he had now no claim to the estate, but he found great interest, and so did Mrs. Sherwood, in wandering about the neighbourhood. At Paris they stayed with one of Mrs. Sherwood's old schoolfellows, Miss Rowden, who had accompanied Monsieur and Madame St. Quintin on their return there, and opened a school in connection with them. Their pupils were little English girls, quite Frenchified in their manners and appearances, and among them at the time was Fanny Kemble.

In the Spring of the following year Mrs. Sherwood was invited to Worcester to meet Mrs. Elizabeth Fry. After a public breakfast they drove to the gaol, Mrs. Fry selecting her as her companion in the carriage. The subject of their talk as they went along was the danger of celebrity, especially for women, and Mrs. Fry confessed that she was in a situation of greater temptation than her listener, though she, too, was a known personage, as her acts and deeds brought her so much into public. In spite of the invidious nature of the worthy Quakeress's remarks, Mrs. Sherwood found her a fine composed, majestic woman, and was greatly interested in her address, which she gave in the chapel from the preacher's place, a clergyman of the Church of England standing on each side of her.

It was some years later that they had an invitation to visit their old regiment, the 53rd, which was stationed at Weedon Barracks. They were most warmly welcomed and hospitably entertained, and *Auld Lang Syne* was played in their honour. One morning as Mrs. Sherwood was passing through the hall during her stay at Weedon she found it half filled with officers and members of the band, who crowded round her in a circle, their eyes glistening with pleasure. They were all tall military men, finely drawn up, and for a moment she did not know them, but soon recognised the babes she had nursed and dressed and lulled to sleep, and the boys she had taught when they were scarce able to lisp their letters. It was a moment of great emotion for her, and she owns that she was relieved when she could retire to weep and pray for her orphan boys who had benefited so greatly by what had been done for them.

The marriages of her eldest daughter, Mary Henrietta, and Mary Parsons, the eldest Indian orphan, which followed shortly afterwards, had an unsettling effect on the family, and as Lucy Sherwood was in very precarious health, they determined to give up their home near Worcester, and travel abroad. Taking pupils was now no longer necessary from a financial point of view, and much as Mrs. Sherwood loved teaching, she was not now strong enough for so much exertion as it entailed.

There were riots in Lyons during the time they stayed there, and as they were the only English people in the place, and public feeling ran high against them, they were only saved from probable insult by their

landlord, who hurried them off to Nice one day on the plea that the coachman they had hired to drive them was obliged to go that very morning. A paragraph to the effect that the entire family of an English Captain S. had been brutally murdered by the populace during the riots in Lyons appeared in the French papers soon afterwards, and very greatly distressed their friends until it was known that they were safe.

On their way home from this holiday they sailed in the *Batavier* from Rotterdam; the vessel that was bringing home Sir Walter Scott, then in a dying condition. He was returning with his son and daughter from Naples, where he had received such honours as are usually only paid to crowned heads. A bed had been spread in his barouche which was wheeled on deck from a wooden pier, so that he should not be disturbed, and a solemn silence for some minutes followed his coming on board, for all were so grieved to see the wreck which illness had wrought upon him. The fatigue of the mooring made him worse, and he was given a sleeping draught; but on awaking he called for pen and ink, and Mrs. Sherwood had the great pleasure of giving up these implements which she was using at the moment, for the benefit of the eminent invalid.

When they were settled at home again, Mrs. Sherwood noticed that her husband wanted an object to employ his mind, and asked him to look out a few words in Hebrew for her, for a *Type Dictionary* she was compiling. Out of a spirit of kindness and courtesy he did this, and grew so much interested that after a time he started to make a Hebrew Concordance; a

work which prevented him from spending many weary hours, and kept him in mental occupation for years.

Another pleasant re-union with her old Sunday Scholars at Bridgnorth was arranged for Mrs. Sherwood in the March of the year following their return from the Continent. She was visiting her brother, the Reverend Marten Butt, when one of her old pupils came to see her, so she engaged her to take the management of a tea party to which all the old scholars were to be invited. As she remembered them all in the freshest bloom of childhood and youth, she was shocked when she found herself surrounded by a number of elderly women. They caught her hands and kissed them, while their eyes ran with tears; 'but,' she writes, 'I could not let it so pass, and though some may blame me, I acknowledge that I kissed them all, though for me to recognise the individuals present was impossible, and I did not pretend to do it.'

The scene was most affecting. They spoke of days long past, and of those who were not present, for only eight could be found of what had once been a large school, and she was deeply moved to hear that the girls of the first classes had often gone on a Sunday evening to a round hill near the castle, to pray for her and her sister after they had left Bridgnorth, and to beg also that they might never forget what they had taught them. They sang many of their favourite hymns, and spoke of past pleasures and delights, and then they parted, 'assuredly never more to meet again on earth.'

Changes were again taking place in the Sherwood family. Emily's illness was so gradual that her sudden

death came as a shocking surprise to the bereaved parents. When the year of mourning for their sister was over, first Henry Martyn, and then Lucy were married, leaving only the youngest daughter, Sophia, at home. Lucy, alas! died in her first confinement within a year.

The next important event was the marriage of Sophia to Dr. Streeten, but Mrs. Sherwood did not lose her daughter's society, for it was arranged that they should all live together in Worcester. Here they spent some very happy years. Mrs. Sherwood was still actively occupied in literary work in which she was helped by her daughter, while her son-in-law corrected her proofs.

She was not, however, to leave this world without suffering more of the pain of loss. Her son-in-law, Dr. Streeten, died somewhat unexpectedly at the comparatively early age of forty-eight; and eighteen months afterwards, Captain Sherwood followed him to the grave, on December 6th, 1849.

Mrs. Sherwood herself departed this life in September, 1851. She is said to have written seventy-three works altogether, amongst which *Henry and his Bearer*, *The Fairchild Family*, *The Lady of the Manor*, *The Little Woodman and his Dog Cæsar*, are now the best known. But interesting as these works are, and really charming in their vivid pictures of a day which has passed away, perhaps her best record may be in the noble efforts she made to teach the children of the regiment, and in the useful lives of the orphans to whom she was indeed a mother in Israel.